



FROG GOD GAMES ADVENTURES

THE DEVIL OF MURDER CLIFFS

by Casey Christofferson



5TH EDITION
COMPATIBLE

THE DEVIL OF MURDER CLIFFS

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The Devil of Murder Cliffs

By Casey W. Christofferson

*In the pale light of the witching hour when the moon shows
off its twin horns,
'Tis said that a devil rises from the deep with a murderous
taste for the soul.
You will know ere he stalks for the crows love to talk
About how they have picked clean your bones.*

High in the cliffs along the timber road stands the Von Klarch Inn. Half ruin, half fortress, the repurposed manor serves as a waystation for adventurers seeking fame and fortune in the mountainous north. Built nearly 500 years ago, the inn started out as the estate of the wealthy Von Klarch family, who made their fortune trading with the northern dwarves.

In the intervening years, the family line has fallen on hard times. Frequent attacks by the rising tide of gnolls, orcs, and trolls who overtook the north over the intervening centuries wreaked havoc on large parts of the estate, destroying the north wing and shrinking the Von Klarches' once-substantial land holdings. Lady Elis Von Klarch now leases large tracts of timber from the family's remaining lands to business-minded barons living closer to the civilization in order to keep her family afloat.

More recently, attacks by local bandits — allegedly captained by a man referred to as the Devil of Murder Cliffs in reference to a local legend — have increased in frequency. These attacks threaten travelers on the road and are bad for business.

Others say a true devil released from its bondage once again stalks the region of the Murder Cliffs. Despite these troubles, the Von Klarch Inn is the only reasonably civilized place to spend the night in the bandit-infested Murder Cliffs.

Adventure Background

The Devil of Murder Cliffs is an adventure for 4–6 characters of levels 3–5 though it can easily be scaled for lower- or higher-level adventurers. The adventure assumes at least one wizard, one cleric, and one rogue are in the party though there is a fair amount of opportunity for other character classes, especially meat shields and sword swingers, to shine.

You can place the Von Klarch Inn in any mountainous region in your campaign, in a wilderness where beasts still roam the land. Lumberjacks cut the trees, but they are the exception within the woods. For the most part, the adventurers are much more likely to encounter gnolls and other humanoids.

You may begin the adventure within the wilderness region of the Murder Cliffs at a point when the characters trek far away from their town, village, or city of choice, or they may use it as a waystation for a larger adventure involving expeditions into the north.

Part 1: The Arrival

The characters arrive at the Von Klarch Inn as the local bandit warlord Krateis attacks. The staff, with the characters' help, stave off the attack, but not before Krateis and his men destroy several outbuildings and kill a good number of the valiant defenders. The management of the inn implores the characters to find Krateis — alleged to be the “Devil of Murder Cliffs” — and smash his bandit operation once and for all. The characters are encouraged to bring Krateis in alive so he can be hung in the courtyard as a warning to all other would-be bandits and highwaymen.

Part 2: To Hunt the Devil

The second part of the adventure involves the hunt for the true Devil of Murder Cliffs. Here, the characters must search for the bandit camp of Krateis where the highwaymen hide and may be looking for the lair of the druid Arcenaur. There are also various gnoll lairs and other hidden locations within the Murder Cliffs but exploring them may be hampered by random encounters, set encounters, and strange occurrences.

Part 3: The Devil Among Us

The third part of the adventure returns the characters to the Von Klarch Inn. The characters may be laden with the bandits' loot and, possibly, the captured bandits themselves. Upon returning, the characters are invited to a feast though not everyone at the dinner may be who they seem. They soon find themselves in the midst of many dangers as friends and foes become difficult to distinguish, even as a true fiend stalks among them! The adventure concludes when the true Devil of Murder Cliffs is revealed.

Important Characters

Listed below are some of the important NPCs the characters encounter during the course of the adventure.

Lady Elis Von Klarch

Lady Elis Von Klarch (see the **Appendix**) is the head of the Von Klarch estate. She is a spoiled only child who would much prefer a life spending money in a large city to running her family's ruined backwater estate. The widow is beautiful though her age is catching up to her, almost as quickly as her money is running out. If ruthlessness and avarice had a name, it would be Lady Elis Von Klarch.

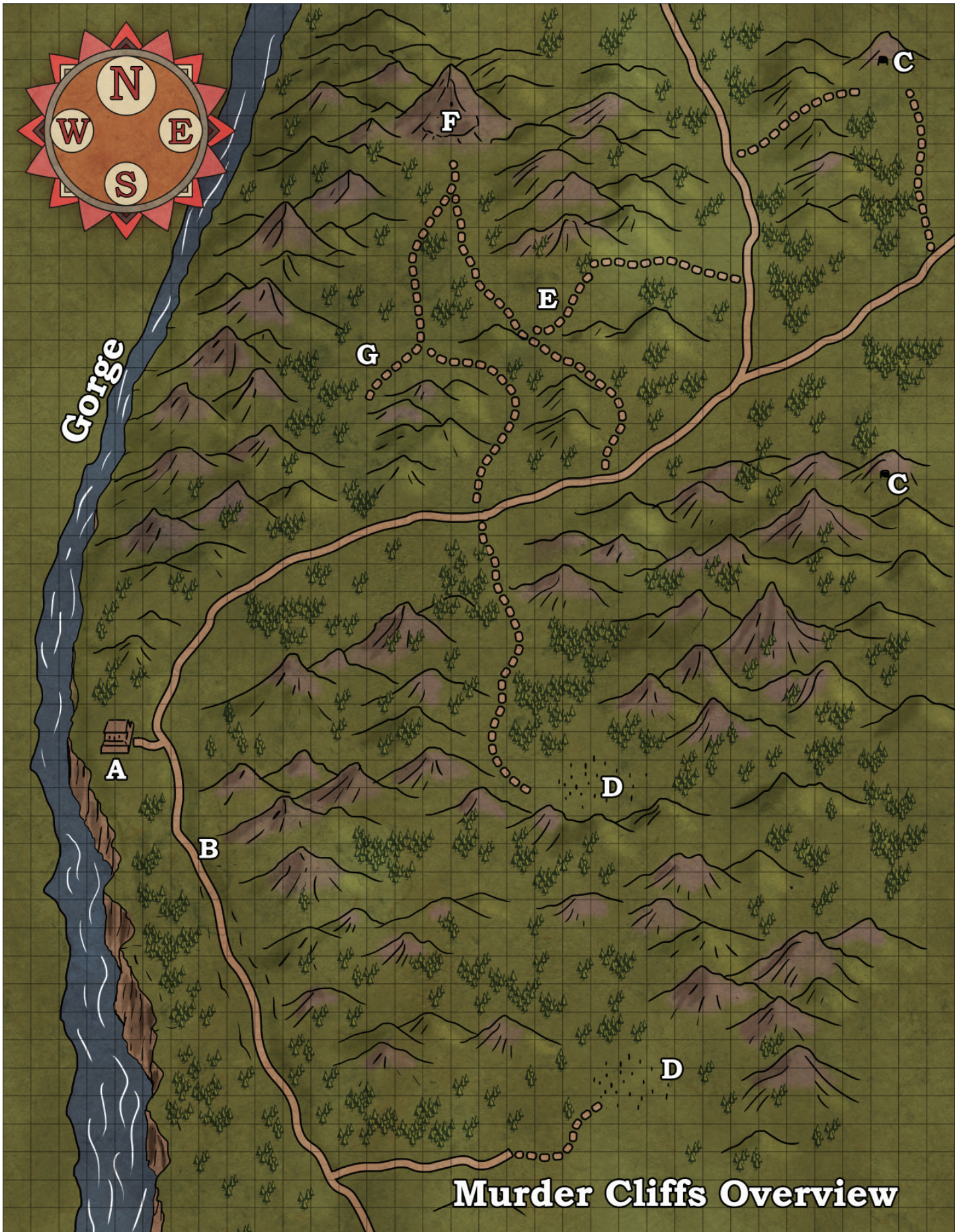
Several years ago, Lady Elis made the acquaintance of Krateis. The mercenary commander had fallen out of favor due to his fiercely brutal tactics and tendency to deny quarter, even to nobles with the ability to pay a hefty ransom.

For many years, Lady Elis and Krateis enjoyed a working relationship where he and his bandits would tip off the Von Klarches about returning adventurers laden with treasures who were perhaps too difficult or dangerous a mark for his band. The bandits would give a bit of chase to hustle the quarry back to the Von Klarch estate, and they would split the profits once the adventurers were dealt with. For other quarry, the bandits handled the situation themselves and did their best to keep the numbers of gnolls scouting the peaks to a manageable number.

Recently, Lady Elis and Krateis have been on the outs. As Krateis' band has grown in strength and numbers, Elis has become suspicious that Krateis intends to take all the treasure and leave her to wither in destitution. Her anger has become such that she is willing to hire a rival band of mercenaries to hunt down Krateis and bring him to justice. Her ultimate hope is that she can get Krateis to see the value of their partnership and for her newly hired mercenaries to thin the herd of bandits the chieftain has gathered to his devil's head banner.

Lady Elis is educated and trained in magic, focusing mostly on charms

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Captain Krateis

Captain Krateis (see the **Appendix**) is a tall, powerfully built man of indeterminate age with a thick sandy beard and a mane of hair shot with red, gold, and gray. His eyes are cold blue, and his face is rough and ruddy though it is often split with a cunning smile when not encased in his signature devil's head helm. Krateis is the sometime lover and partner in crime of Lady Elis Von Klarch though currently their relationship is on ice.

Captain Krateis was a mercenary for years serving various lords and kinglets. He developed a reputation for disobedience, something most nobles can do without. Banditry was second nature to Krateis, but during one particular raid, Krateis came across a treasure that defined him for the last half-decade of his career: a devil's head helm. The previous owner, a southern potentate, had commissioned a helm that would strike fear into the hearts of his foes. The result was an enchanted bascinet with a pair of spiked horns that protrude from the top of the brow and a tooled, inlaid facepiece resembling a fiendish countenance. The helm's eye slits glow an ominous red, and a thin fog escapes the fanged mouth when the wearer speaks.

Krateis is something of a historian and a lover of fine, exotic, and ancient things. Because of this, he was quick to bring his operations north to capitalize on the legends of the Devil of Murder Cliffs. This brought him to his on again, off again relationship with Lady Elis and continued the friction with her advisor Svan Dorian.

Krateis' recent studies have raised his suspicions that more is going on at the Von Klarch estate than the obvious murder and robbery schemes he and Lady Elis Von Klarch organized. Krateis figures to eventually get to the bottom of it should his relationship with Lady Elis thaw again. If it cannot, he figures to raise a force to sack the estate and research his suspicions personally. To do this, however, he needs an in for himself and his crew, and he needs Svan Dorian eliminated.

Old Orlak

Orlak (see the **Appendix**) is a timber guide who has gotten on in years and spends less time working as a guide and more time drinking at the inn. He offers his services as a guide to merchants plying the road from the cities in the south to the mining encampments of the north.

Orlak is something of a storyteller and takes credit for all sorts of deeds in the mountains from his younger years that he probably wasn't actually a part of. If asked about the Devil of Murder Cliffs, he may slip up and ask which one before quickly having another drink and making up some story or other about Krateis' atrocities.

Orlak has a deal worked out with Lady Von Klarch to ensure that wealthy travelers with the right sort of goods end up at the inn and out of the grasp of Krateis. Orlak sticks to the north-south roads and refuses to venture deeper into the mountain passes — for good reason. Krateis has threatened to crucify the old man if he ever catches him attempting to lead assassins to his lair. Orlak is attempting to woo Velanika into hiring him as a guide for her merchant trains, hoping to move through the mountains with armed guards to protect him. After Krateis' most recent assault on the manor, however, he refuses to take anyone until after someone deals with Krateis.

Velanika Rosnin

Velanika (N female human **veteran**) is a shrewd businesswoman hailing from the southern city-states. She has a four-wagon caravan to haul trade goods up to the silver camps of the north that is currently stuck at the inn because of the bandit attacks on travelers. She may offer the characters 50 gp per wagon to get her and her drivers to the silver camps to drop off her wares and to haul a load of silver back unscathed. She realizes now that she is going to need more protection than her bosses in the southern cities have offered her and is willing to spend the money to get the job done. She currently has eight guards in her retinue, and they split time between guarding the wagons and sharing a pair of upstairs rooms.



to get what she wants out of life. Her larger goal is to trap the spirit of Aspdu, the true Devil of Murder Cliffs, to control and gain power over him. She requires the *talisman of Aspdu* but has been unable to ascertain its location. Should she find the talisman, she will place it around the neck of the clone she is growing within her laboratory. She'll then summon Aspdu's spirit to occupy the empty vessel, then command the pit fiend to do her bidding as the wizard king of Murder Cliffs did in the days of old.

Svan Dorian

Svan Dorian (see the **Appendix**) is an ambitious man in his mid-30s with carefully coiffured black hair, a patrician's nose, and sharp gray eyes. He stands about 5-feet-10-inches tall and seems powerfully built under the velvet finery of a professional butler and herald. Lady Elis brought Svan with her from the city five years ago to replace the old family butler who died shortly after the passing of her father.

Svan Dorian serves as seneschal of the estate and runs the inn's operations with Lady Elis. Svan Dorian is secretly a vicar in service of Moloch and extensively refurbished the shrine beneath the estate using Lady Elis' coin in a costly restoration.

Svan is fully knowledgeable of the various hidden pits, traps, and switches rigged throughout the estate. He hates Krateis with a burning passion. He wishes for nothing more than to get his hands on the bandit and sacrifice him to Moloch to draw out the spirit of Aspdu. But Svan knows that he can get away with this only if he can stoke Lady Elis' anger to the boiling point. Svan would replace Krateis with Dusana and Lujub as leaders of the bandit confederation. He has already converted the pair to his cause.

Head Matron Jelena Kukas

Jelena (NG female human **commoner**) is a square-built woman in her 50s who runs the day-to-day operations of the estate with an iron fist though she does not run the inn's business operations. She sees to the maids and the careful cleanup of the recently "vacated" chambers of the inn. Several of her children work for Lady Elis Von Klarch.

Arcenaur the Druid

Arcenaur (see the **Appendix**) is commonly mistaken for the Devil of Murder Cliffs as he silently wages war on the gnolls, highwaymen, and lumberjacks who violate his domain. He prefers frightening off the lumberjacks over outright murder though, if pressed, he has no problem spilling their blood on the high-country ground.

Lady Elis would like nothing more than to see Arcenaur flayed and hurled to the crows. She would readily implicate Arcenaur as an accomplice to the Devil of Murder Cliffs.

Aspdu's Evil Spirit

Aspdu is the true Devil of Murder Cliffs. Once a powerful pit fiend in service to Moloch, Aspdu was reduced in power when a wizard king of old attempted to break his contract with the devil. Aspdu's bones were melded to the mountainside, and the pit fiend's evil spirit now haunts the cliffs, possessing others as he attempts to reunite with his old bones and return to Hell with the 99 souls his master tasked him to gather. Aspdu is particularly interested in capturing the soul of Lady Elis as he believes she is descended from the ancient wizard who blasted his flesh across the mountainside.

Aspdu's ghost is merely a ghost though he may take other forms and possess NPCs (and possibly the characters). The ghost has power only during the nights of the Devil's Moon when he can project a somewhat corporeal form, typically appearing in the guise of a handsome traveling merchant.

Aspdu's motivations are to regenerate his body and return to Hell — after he wreaks as much evil and havoc as he possibly can. He needs the *talisman of Aspdu* and an empty vessel to achieve his plan. Lady Elis' desire to take control of the pit fiend using the clone in her conjuring chamber may provide the pit fiend with a new body so he can return to the world.

Aspdu uses the statistics of a **ghost**, except for the following:

- His Challenge Rating is 5 (1,800 XP).
- He has proficiency in Dexterity (+4), Constitution (+3), and Wisdom (+4) saving throws.
- He has truesight out to 120 feet.
- He has 54 (12d8) hit points.
- The saving throw DC for Aspdu's Horrifying Visage and Possession is 14.
- Aspdu's Possession recharges on a 5–6, and Aspdu can use all the class features of the possessed creature, if it has any. In addition, Aspdu can use an action to attempt to delve into the creature's thoughts, as if he had cast the *detect thoughts* spell (DC 14 spell save). Once he has done so, he cannot do so again for 24 hours.

Part I: The Arrival

The first part of the adventure involves the characters' arrival at the Von Klarch Inn. If you need to spice up the characters' travel to the inn, use the random day and night wilderness encounter tables provided in **Part 2: To Hunt the Devil** to throw a challenge at the characters as needed.

Once they finally arrive at the inn, the characters discover Krateis' **bandits** astride unarmored **warhorses** attacking the building. The raiders assault the outer perimeter of the grounds near the breastworks on horseback with bows and arrows. A rider with an ominous horned helm and glowing red eyes sits astride a horse observing the attack.

A lady in an upper-story window howls with rage at the horsemen, shaking her fist while the inn's 10 **guards** standing at the breastworks to the north of the inn trade shots with the riders. The rider in the distance laughs, and as he does, smoke pours from the mouth slit of his helm, surrounding him in a hellish glow.

As the characters come within earshot of the conflict, the lady in the tower window yells down to them, offering 10 gp for each bandit they take out. Assuming the characters are newly arrived to the fight, the riders target them as well.

The bandits use hit-and-run tactics as they ride past the characters, firing and then moving on. The bandits avoid direct melee if possible and retreat after they lose half their hit points or if any of their number are killed. Krateis departs as soon as his bandits engage the characters.

After the battle, Lady Elis Von Klarch and her seneschal Svan Dorian greet the characters. Lady Elis reveals the name of her nemesis to be Captain Krateis, a bandit leader also known as the Devil of Murder Cliffs. She further explains that Krateis is in league with bands of gnolls and a twisted druid known as Arcenaur. Together, this league of villains has set out to ruin her business and have brought silver and lumber trade throughout the mountains to a standstill.

She asks the characters to hunt these foes down and break their hold on the mountain passes. In return, she offers them 10 sp per confirmed gnoll or bandit slain. She further offers the characters 300 gp for bringing Krateis in dead or alive (although she prefers alive), and an additional 100 gp for Arcenaur. The bandits, she insists, must be taught a hard lesson. If asked what she means, she points to a tree in the yard that would easily support a rope and 300 pounds or more of weight.

Characters attempting to gather more information that make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will note that the lady's dress seems a bit threadbare. It was obviously very expensive at one time but seems about a decade out of date. Otherwise, it quickly becomes apparent that everything about the inn seems just a bit shabby and run down. It could be surmised that Lady Von Klarch is short on money. It is also

Ghost of a Devil

Listed here are Aspdu's actions and activities based on whom he possesses. The only beings the ghost of Aspdu does not attempt to possess are Krateis and Lady Elis. You may decide whom the ghost possesses or may roll 1d6 and select from below.

1. Arcenaur: If Aspdu possesses Arcenaur, he uses the druid's powers to harass the denizens of the inn as he seeks access to the empty vessel hidden inside. If the characters attempt to capture or kill Arcenaur while Aspdu is possessing him, he puts up a meager defense and almost immediately surrenders.

2. Velanika Rosnin: If Aspdu possesses Velanika, he uses her to get the characters to help him find the talisman. Once within a few miles of the talisman, Velanika disappears as Aspdu leads her to collect the item. She is later found in the custody of Arcenaur or Krateis.

3. Orlak: If Aspdu possesses Orlak, he offers to guide the characters through the mountains. Instead, he leads them to within a few miles of the Devil's Dolmen then disappears while he goes to collect the talisman. He abandons the characters, only to arrive later claiming to have escaped from the bandits.

4. Aspdu's Ghost: Aspdu's ghost approaches a solitary character with the intent of possessing him or her and heading to the site of the talisman. Once the ghost acquires the talisman, it returns to the inn immediately to acquire the empty vessel.

5. Svan Dorian: If Aspdu possesses Svan Dorian, the chamberlain of the house insists on joining the characters in their hunt for the Devil of Murder Cliffs. He leads the party toward the Devil's Dolmen instead, with the intent of collecting the talisman. Like the others, he slips away only to return with a made-up story of becoming lost.

6. Dusana or Lujub: Aspdu may possess one of the twins. This scenario works best if Krateis captures the characters. The ghost possesses one of the twins and helps the characters to escape but leads them in the direction of the Devil's Dolmen where it seeks the talisman.

Whichever choice you make, options are available for using Aspdu's evil spirit to move the adventure along. Just remember that Aspdu desperately wants to retrieve the talisman from the Devil's Dolmen then return to the inn to find the vacant clone growing in Lady Elis' chambers. Aspdu will do almost anything to find and retrieve the talisman, even tricking the characters into accomplishing the deed for him.

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apparent that although several rooms are available at the inn, very few of them are currently rented. If asked about customers and the rundown quality of the inn, Lady Elis feigns embarrassment and says the bandit “situation” has strapped her inn financially.

The characters’ actions at this point flavor their interactions with the Von Klarches for the first part of the adventure and, specifically, the sort of deal offered to them by Lady Elis Von Klarch. Characters have the opportunity to briefly interact with various members of the Von Klarch retinue, their men-at-arms, and the workers before setting out on the next leg of their journey. The workers at the estate are detailed in the descriptions of the Von Klarch Inn.

The encounters with the staff are friendly, and the Von Klarch clan seems very concerned about solving the bandit and gnomish problem they face. The characters are properly wined, dined, fed, and given fine rooms facing the mountains (not those facing the gorge). The rooms are not trapped in any way. You should make the characters feel safe and introduce some of the other travelers visiting the region. The overall atmosphere should be one of casual comfort.

It is during this time that the characters may first encounter Aspdu’s ghost and the NPC the ghost currently possesses during this lunar phase (see the **Ghost of a Devil** sidebar). The possessed individual has its own motivations and seeks to convince the characters to find the *talisman of Aspdu*. The ghost explains cryptically that finding the talisman may be the key to ending all the troubles facing the inn. If the characters become too insistent while questioning the possessed NPC, Aspdu abandons the body, leaving the characters to deal with a suddenly confused NPC who has no knowledge of any talisman.

Once the characters leave the inn in search of Krateis and his bandits (and possibly the talisman), proceed to **Part 2: To Hunt the Devil**.

Note: Characters can be notoriously nosy. They may in some way figure out early on that the Von Klarches are not on the level. This is fine, just remember the old saying about curiosity and cats and proceed to **Part 3: The Devil Among Us**.

Von Klarch Estate

Use the following descriptions for the Von Klarch Inn and its surrounding grounds. Initially, characters may not get much of a chance to fully explore the grounds if they quickly set off in search of Krateis, but Lady Elis will have special rooms waiting for them once they return with all their treasure. **Part 3: The Devil Among Us** takes place back at the inn once the characters deal with the bandits or guess that something is wrong at the Von Klarch Estate.

A. Grounds

The Von Klarch Estate grounds are found just around a bend in the winding mountain roads that pass closest to the cliffs overlooking the river 300 feet below. The grounds consist of broken pieces of an original fortress wall, with the majority of the ruins, including the main structure, spread along the northern end of the land.

The southern and eastern sections of the estate are guarded by natural rock walls, with the pass to the east overlooked by the vestibule tower and a mountain trail that turns off to the north.

The grounds are typically guarded by 4 **guards** who act as sentries. The sentries are the first line of defense for the inn and focus their attention along the northern section of the grounds, nearest to the ruins and at the eastern pathway where they stop visitors and direct them to the proper entry.

B. Ruins

The northern end of the grounds consists of the ruins of the original curtain wall and the remnants of a northern watchtower destroyed during one of the many attacks on the manor by raiding gnomes and highwaymen. The ruins consist of stones in sizes ranging from 4 foot to 5 foot each. Smaller stones have been gathered and stacked to form a breastwork that is used by the defenders to slow attacks against the inn.

C. Breastworks

The breastworks are 5 feet tall and 3 feet wide and afford firing positions for guardians of the inn against attackers. The breastwork offers half-cover to those standing behind it.

D. Mountain Gate

The mountain gate is a wrought-iron gate attached to the breastworks that has seen better days. One of the inn’s **guards** usually mans the gate, which is locked and unlocked as visitors to the inn make their way to and from the northern reaches of Murder Cliffs.

E. Velanika’s Wagons

Four trade wagons laden with trade goods are circled here along the southern grounds of the inn. The wagons belong to a merchant named Velanika Rosnin who is attempting to travel to the silver camps in the north. Each wagon contains 500 gp worth of trade goods ranging from rope, dried food, blankets, tents, tent stakes, tools, lamp oil, and the like. The exact nature of the supplies is left up to you. The four drivers (various **commoners**) and 8 **guards** protect the wagons.

The Von Klarch Inn

The inn proper is made up of the remnants of the great Von Klarch Estate. The three-story building is made of a combination of marble and limestone, with a granite foundation and cornerstones.

I. Porch and Vestibule

A worn stone porch leads to scarred oaken double doors that open onto a vestibule that has seen better days. In older times, the vestibule served

Standard Features

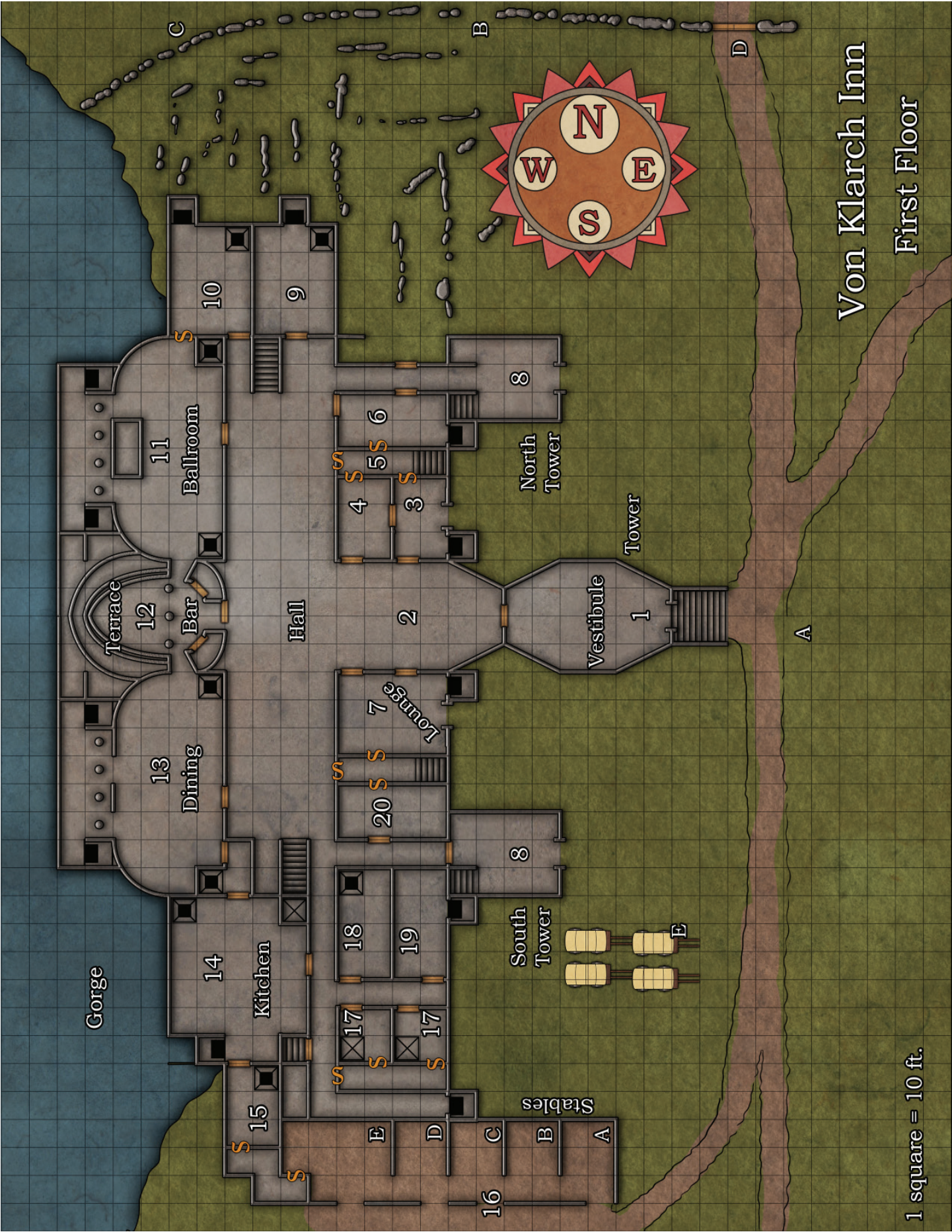
Interior Windows: Ground-floor windows are barred to prevent assault by bandits and raiders and are shuttered and curtained from the inside. The bars require a DC 19 Strength check to break or dismantle. Upper-story windows are shuttered against the weather and curtained on the inside to keep down drafts.

Secret Doors: The Von Klarch Inn is filled with secret doors and passageways, built to allow clandestine entry into guest rooms or to lead to pit traps. The secret doors require a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice. The pit traps, located next to fireplaces so they are hidden by the manor’s many chimneys, deposit victims onto spikes located in the dungeon and caves below the estate.

Pit Traps: The spiked pit traps sprung from the first level deals 1d6 piercing damage. The spiked pit traps hidden in the closets and bathrooms add 2d6 piercing damage for each story that they are found on. Falling down one of the pit traps on the second floor deals 10 (3d6) piercing damage, while the third floor causes 17 (5d6) piercing damage. The traps require a DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) check to locate and a DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools to disarm. They can be triggered from outside the room by turning the doorknob counterclockwise twice, or can be triggered by “accidentally” standing atop one of the covered trapdoor chutes. Consequently, the traps can be locked in place by turning the handle clockwise twice from outside the room before the door closes. The Von Klarches seldom set the traps until they are certain their visitors are laden with coin for them to steal!

Pass-Through Pits: As indicated on the map, some of the pits from the second story pass through sections of the inn on the ground floor. These areas are bricked in and look like additional chimney spaces. A DC 15 Intelligence check would lead one to believe that there would, therefore, be hearths of some sort in a sublevel of the inn such as a cellar or basement.

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Von Klarch Inn
First Floor

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as visitors' "introduction" to the family estate. The marble facades that decorate this room are now cracked, revealing the native limestone of the building's exterior.

Currently, a house porter (N male human **commoner**) stands at the porch, offering aid and assistance to visitors and a truncheon to trespassers without the coin to rent a room for the night. The porter keeps an eye out for visitors who may need a groom for their horses or a bellhop to carry luggage to the guestrooms. If the grounds are in imminent danger, he bars the doors to the vestibule and the grand hall beyond.

2. Grand Hall

The vestibule opens into the grand hall, a great T-shaped hall paneled in polished hardwood and marble. The great hall is a far cry cleaner and far statelier to the eye than the vestibule outside and shows that a considerable amount of work goes into keeping it that way. To the right is a broad enclosed desk where guests can check in, as well as a bellhop station.

Beyond the entry, the hall turns north and south with entrances to the ballroom, grand dining room, terrace bar, hunters' lounge, lavatories, servants' quarters, and the vast kitchens. Staircases at the north and south of the hall lead to the upper stories and the guest rooms found there. The rooms once served the noble family but now serve the inn's guests.

Paintings and sculptures in the grand hall represent various members of the Von Klarch family over the last 300 years. Bare spots on the wall mark where other more valuable paintings once hung, but they have been sold off in recent years to settle family debts.

3. Check-in Desk and Office

Characters entering the inn for the first time are greeted by **Taniya** (N female human **commoner**), a youngish local girl who asks if they need lodging and indicates the prices for a night, a week, a month, or a yearly stay. Her mother is Head Matron Jelena Kukas, who manages the staff for Svan Dorian. Taniya is bored with her job to say the least and spends most of her time frustrating Gravnice. She flirts with new arrivals, believing this drives Gravnice crazy. She reminds characters to ring the bell in their room should they need anything from her at all.

The ledger indicates a variety of travelers coming from the south and heading north though it rarely lists return visits. This information could be gathered with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check.

4. Bellhop Station

Also at the desk is the bellhop station where Gravnice waits to haul bags when not busying himself with polishing doorknobs, brass, or whatever else he can do to stay busy. Gravnice is very strong and asks few questions. For this reason, Lady Von Klarch and Svan Dorian put his brawn to use in the "other" family business whenever necessary.

A secret door in the back of the bellhop station leads to an access hallway.

Gravnice uses the statistics of a **thug**, except that he wields a club (+4 to hit, 4 [1d4 + 2] bludgeoning damage) instead of a mace and does not have a heavy crossbow.

5. Access Hallway

A hidden hallway is located between the supply closet and the bellhop station. A stairway descends to the caves and dungeon below the inn, ending right next to the hidden jail (**Area 43**). Secret doors lead to the bellhop station, the supply closet, and a secret entrance from the main hall that is hidden behind a portrait of Markus Von Klarch.

6. Supply Closet

The supply closet is filled with mops, brooms, soap, vinegar, brass polish, and other cleaning supplies used by the staff to keep the estate clean. A secret door hidden behind a rack of fresh linens leads to the access hallway.

7. Hunters' Lounge

This room is filled with hunting memorabilia. Its doors are flanked with stuffed black bears that have been dressed in hunter's caps and armed with bows. The lounge is small and cozy, with seating for perhaps 10. It is open by reservation only. Guests sit in the lounge and smoke pipes as they tell tales from overstuffed armchairs and receive bottle service from the terrace bar. Renting the room is 10 sp for an entire evening. Drinks and tips are extra, of course, and you may set their prices appropriately for your campaign. There is a 50% chance that Old Orlak is having a glass of brandy and a cigar here, reservations be damned.

8. North and South Towers, Ground Floor

The towers flanking the vestibule tower serve as the main defense for the yard and main entrance to the estate. The ground floor towers serve as barracks for 5 **guards** who occupy each tower. The guards keep 2d6 gp and a clean uniform in their footlockers.

The guards rotate shifts so there are always at least 3 guards up and working per tower at any given time and 2 guards sleeping in the bunkroom on the ground floor. Each working guard mans a different level of the tower (**Areas 23** and **31**) although they can run up or down the stairs to assist each other.

9. Head Matron's Quarters

Head Matron Jelena Kukas (see above) lives in this room in the north wing, which is conveniently located next to Lady Elis' ground-floor office. Jelena has a small chest that holds a velvet sack containing two small sapphires worth 25 gp each, as well as 28 gp, and 30 sp.

10. Lady Elis' Office

Lady Elis' office is the ground-floor nerve center of the estate. It is locked with a well-made lock, which can be opened with a DC 19 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Within is a broad walnut desk, a safe, a window, and a fireplace. A painting of Lady Elis' late grandfather Shukov Von Klarch hangs behind the desk. The painting slides to the side to reveal a map of all three levels of the house with buttons over the bathrooms as well as several of the second- and third-floor bedrooms; noticing the secrets behind the painting requires a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check if the characters attempt to look for secrets. When the buttons are pressed, they activate the covered pits in the selected rooms. The purpose of the buttons may not be obvious to those snooping around in the office as pressing them here triggers the pit trap elsewhere in the inn. A brass and crystal bowl filled with silvery liquid sits upon the great wooden desk, which radiates divination magic to magic senses (it is a *bowl of scrying*). A creature who touches the silvery liquid must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 24 hours.

The safe is locked with a devilish combination lock and is trapped to spray acid in the face of any intruder. The lock can be opened with a DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Should the check fail, the trap is triggered, and the creature directly in front of the safe must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) acid damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful saving throw. The trap can be disabled before the attempt to open the safe is made with a DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Within the safe are Lady Elis' spellbooks, 424 gp, 533 sp, the deed to the estate and title to the surrounding lands, and a scroll denoting her coat of arms and the legitimacy of the holding. Also included are the title and deed to an apartment on the lower ring of the Hill District of Bard's Gate, a teacup full of gold wedding rings worth 2d10 gp each, and a champagne glass full of two dozen gold teeth worth 3 gp each. Not all of the teeth are from the same person; some are dwarf teeth, some are halfling teeth, and at least one is a half-orc tusk.

THE DEVIL OF MURDER CLIFFS

11. Ballroom

The smallish ballroom was once reserved for guests who used it for private wedding receptions and personal functions when the great hall was being used for larger functions and events. The ballroom has two fireplaces and an orchestra pit located just beneath the floor that allows dancers to hear the music clearly but hides the orchestra, providing more room on the dancefloor. An archway to the south opens to the terrace bar, while an opening to the west leads to a balcony that affords a stunning view of the gorge beyond.

The orchestra pit contains a bass, a viola, a flute, a cello, and a harp. The instruments are worth about 20 gp each in their current condition.

12. Terrace Bar

Once a popular spot at the Von Klarch Inn, the terrace bar is open only during nice weather from spring through fall. Currently, it is the roost of a swarm of crows. The crows (which use the statistics of a **raven swarm**) are accustomed to people and tend to leave them alone unless bothered. They stare hungrily at the characters.

Locked in the cabinets of the bars that flank the entrance are a case of dwarven whiskey, a case of vodka, 10 bottles of average champagne, 10 bottles of average wine, and 2 kegs of ale. The lock can be opened with a DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

The balcony below the terrace connects the ballroom balcony and dining room balconies.

13. Dining Hall

This small but richly appointed dining hall with two fireplaces has a glass wall overlooking the western balcony that stands over the gorge, affording a fine view of the surroundings. The dining hall is rarely used anymore, and the tables and chairs are covered with dust cloths. Cut-glass doors open to the balcony and the terrace beyond.

14. Kitchen

The kitchen once swarmed with activity but is now down to **Chef Petreshi** (CN male human **spy**) and his 2 **harried assistants** (N male human **commoners**). The trio is capable of preparing meals for up to 30 guests with simple fare, and just over a dozen guests with fine fare.

Petreshi is a local boy who asks few questions and minds his own business. He was once an up-and-coming chef in the southern cities until a gambling debt forced him to flee. Petreshi fights only if attacked. If things go south at the Von Klarch Inn, he steals whatever he can from the main offices and flees the estate. He has already lifted a goodly amount of coin from the inn without anyone suspecting and keeps his treasure stuffed inside a dry-aged beef hanging in the larder.

A servants' stairwell in the eastern wall leads upstairs and is used to deliver room service. It is seldom used these days.

15. Larder

The larder on the south side of the kitchen holds 2 sides of beef, 10 hanging hams, 30 bottles of average wine, 20 bottles of average champagne, 5 bottles of fine wine worth 10 gp each, 5 bottles of fine champagne worth 25 gp each, 6 dozen eggs, 3 barrels of pickles, 20 dried salted trout, 5 slabs of bacon, 10 legs of mutton, and a sand barrel filled with turnips, potatoes, and carrots.

Hidden within a hanging side of beef is a leather sack containing 300 gp that requires a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discover, but only if the meats are searched. Chef Petreshi hides his stolen hoard of coins here.

A door in the southern wall of the larder leads to a secret hallway ending in the stables.

16. Stables

The stables occupy the southern wing of the estate. Honnor, the groom, manages the stables. He is a loyal retainer to the Von Klarch family and assists Gravnic when the lady demands it. He is also an expert at

rebranding steeds for resale when their owners no longer need them.

Honor uses the statistics of a **veteran**, save that he also carries a whip (+3 to hit, 3 [1d4 + 1] slashing damage) and wears studded leather armor and carries a shield, giving him a 15 Armor Class if he is wielding it.

16-A. Carriage House

This portion of the stables is where the Von Klarches keep their monogrammed carriage. The carriage is chased with gold and silver inlay and is enameled a deep black and red. It is worth 300 gp and seats four inside and two atop comfortably. Stowage is tied to a luggage rack in the rear or atop the carriage.

Honor keeps his sword and shield here while working, and in his room when he is not.

16-B through D. Guest Stables

These stables have room for 2–3 horses each. A groom sleeps in the loft above the stable and sees to the upkeep and care of the horses below. The stables are currently filled with draft horses for Velanika's wagon train.

16-E. The Lady's Stable

This stable is where the hitch for the mistress's carriage is kept, as well as her personal riding pony. Five horses in all are kept here. A secret door in the southern wall known only to Lady Elis and her trusted confidants opens onto a hidden hallway that leads to the kitchens. It is intended as an escape route should anything go awry.

17. Bathrooms

These bathrooms feature a washbasin and private toilet. The toilets are rigged with a pit trap that can be armed in Lady Elis' office (**Area 10**) or her private chambers (**Area 37-B**).

18. Chef Petreshi's Room

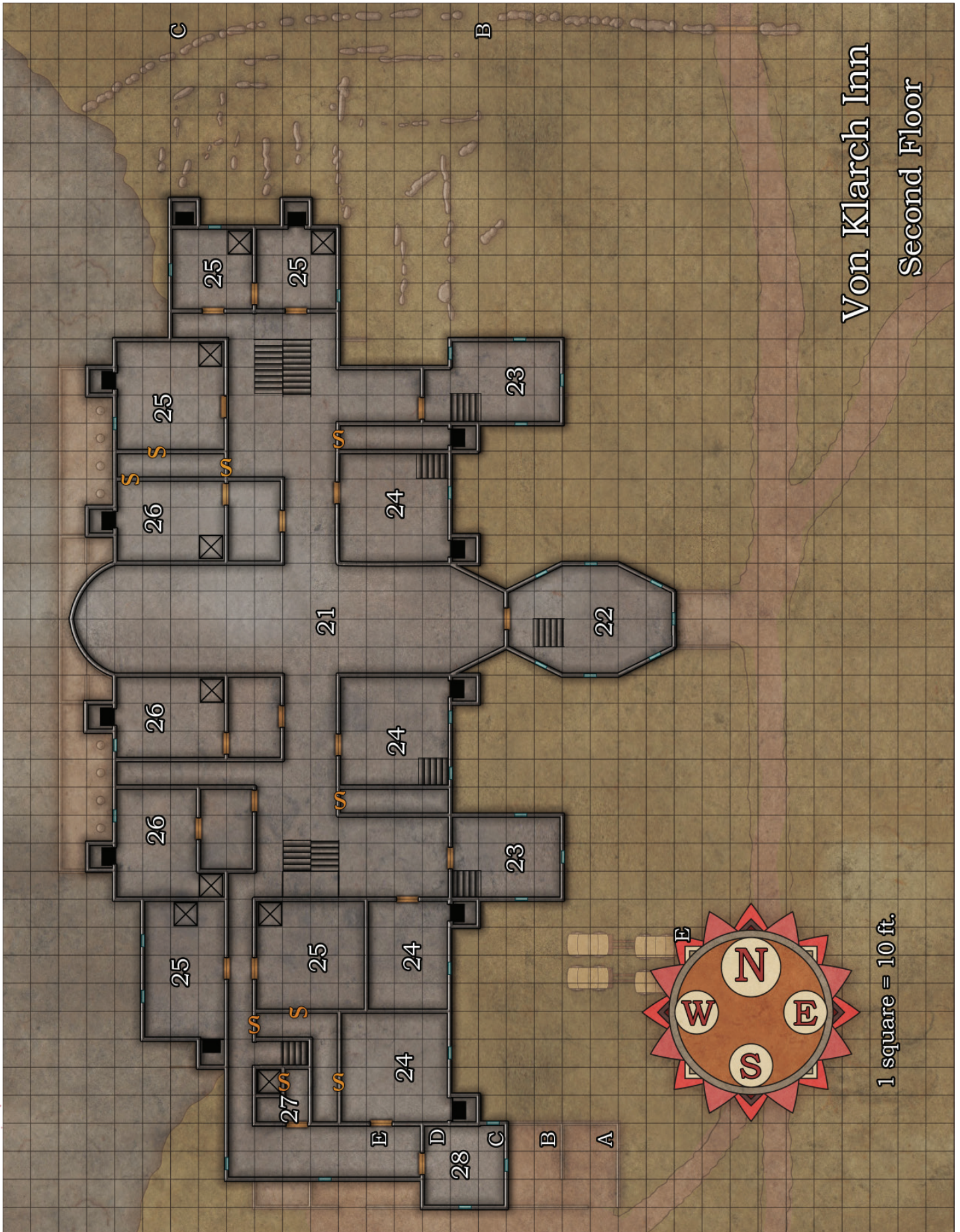
This room is assigned to Chef Petreshi. The door is locked with a good lock that Petreshi installed; it can be opened with a DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Within his room is his wardrobe, which contains a traveling outfit, thieves' tools, a silvered shortsword, and a collection of fine bone-handled cooking knives worth 50 gp. Hidden in an alcove (which can be found with a DC 17 Intelligence [Investigation] check) is a sack containing an additional 210 sp and a golden brooch worth 50 gp that he stole from the manor, as well as a fine landscape painting of the Murder Cliffs by Bedsinsky that is rolled up in a tube. Lady Elis has not noticed it is missing, nor does she have any idea that the painting is worth close to 500 gp to the right collector.

19. Honnor's Room

The room has a distinctive leather smell to it. Within are a pair of saddles — one being repaired, and another completed — and the start to the braid of a 10-foot bullwhip. There is also a chain shirt, a shield, a helm, and a longbow with 20 silver-tipped arrows and 20 normal arrows, and a mask used for when his mistress calls on Honnor to murder guests.

20. Gravnic's Room

Gravnic's room consists of his bed, a suit of chainmail, a shield, a heavy mace, a light crossbow, and a murderer's mask painted with the image of Moloch on it that he uses whenever he is commissioned to murder someone in the name of his lady. Gravnic has an old bottle of gnomish vodka worth 12 gp and a satchel containing 120 sp.



Von Klarch Inn Second Floor

1 square = 10 ft.

The Manor, Second Floor

21. Hall

These broad halls are covered in woven rugs that are threadbare and shabby with age. Stairwells to the east and west lead to the upper and lower floors.

22. Vestibule Tower

The tower rooms that stand over the entryway to the inn are manned by a **guard** armed with a light crossbow.

23. Watchtowers

A guard from **Area 8** watches the yard from this watchtower room.

24. Mountain-View Rooms

The mountain-view rooms have a bed, dresser, and fireplace. They afford a view of the Eastern Peaks. These rooms are not trapped though they may have a secret door. If a secret door is discovered and the characters ask about it, the staff and their mistress simply state that it is an old house built during a different time when the Von Klarches were a larger family with many enemies. They offer to switch the characters' room if they would like.

25. Trapped Rooms

These rooms are similar to the mountain-view rooms, being roughly similar in size and shape. The rooms possess a fireplace and may contain a secret door. Each room has a closet or dressing table and a **hidden pit trap** that drops the victim through a chute to a spike-filled pit in the dungeon below the house. The trapdoor can be triggered from Lady Elis' office (**Area 10**) or via a similar control panel in Lady Elis' room (**Area 37-B**).

26. Trapped Gorge View Suites

These suites are divided into an anteroom for entertaining and for the sequestering of servants, and a master's chamber. The master's chambers are trapped with a **hidden pit trap** similar to the ones in the trapped rooms (**Area 25**). The rooms have spots on the walls where the wallpaper is a different shade, indicating places where picture frames once hung.

Leaded-crystal windows open out to the river gorge to the west.

27. Bathroom

This public bathroom is **trapped** similarly to the ones on the first floor and drops victims down the chute onto the spikes in the dungeon.

28. Old Orlak's Room

This room is where Old Orlak currently stays. It features a bed covered in animal skins and walls that hang with hunting trophies from his big-game hunting days. The usual suspects of owlbear, peryton, and stuffed dire wolf are prominently displayed. Orlak keeps 56 gp, a ruby worth 60 gp, and 214 sp hidden in a secret compartment behind the owlbear's glass eye. He keeps a *potion of lesser restoration* and a *potion of healing* on a nightstand next to a large, half-empty bottle of brandy.

Orlak is often found sleeping here after 11 p.m.

Third Floor

29. Hall

This hall is identical to the second-floor hall (**Area 21**). It contains more threadbare and shabby woven rugs. Stairwells to the east and west lead down to the second floor.

30. Vestibule Tower

This tower room standing over the entryway to the inn is manned by a **guard** armed with a light crossbow. It is otherwise similar to the vestibule tower room below (**Area 22**).

31. Guard Towers

These rooms are exactly like those found on the first and second floors (**Areas 8** and **23**). A guard from **Area 8** watches the yard from this room. The north (**Area 31-A**) and south (**Area 31-B**) towers can be used as cells for prisoners if needed.

32. Mountain-View Rooms

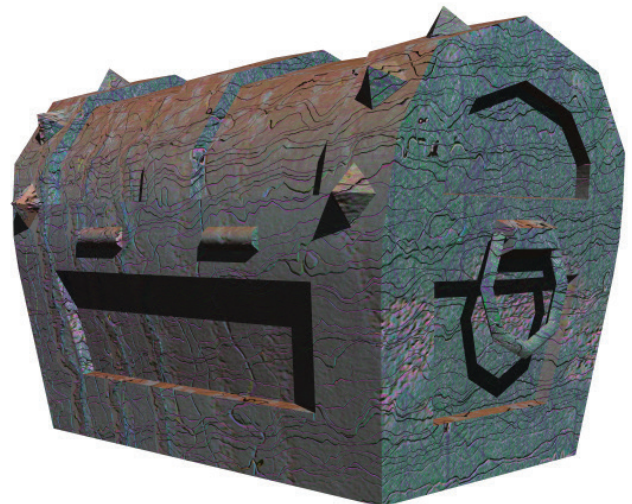
Each of these upper-floor mountain-view rooms contains a bed, a dresser, and a fireplace. They afford a view of the Eastern Peaks. These rooms are not trapped but each has a secret door. They are otherwise identical to the second-floor rooms (**Area 24**).

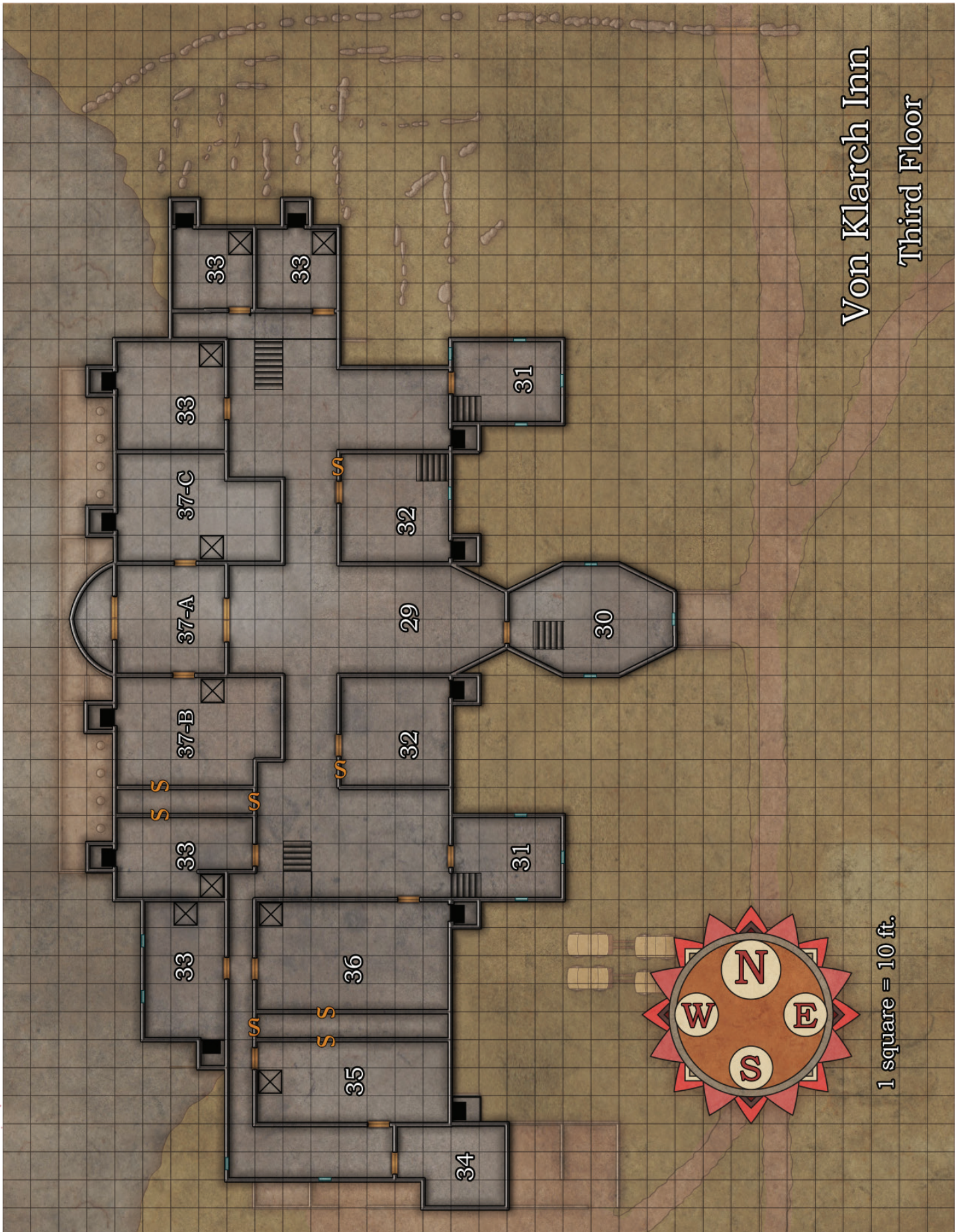
33. Trapped Rooms

These upper-story rooms are identical to the second-floor rooms (**Area 25**) and contain a fireplace and possibly a secret door. Each room has a closet or dressing table and a **hidden pit trap** that drops the victim through a chute to a spike-filled pit in the dungeon below the house. The trapdoor can be triggered from Lady Elis' office (**Area 10**) or via a similar control panel in Lady Elis' room (**Area 37-B**).

34. Svan Dorian's Room

Svan Dorian's room overlooks the southern mountain passes. The door is locked with a very good lock; it is also trapped with a *glyph of warding*, set to trigger if any creature other than Svan attempts to open his door. The lock can be picked with a DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. If the *glyph of warding* is triggered, creatures within 10 feet of it must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. The room is adorned with crimson velvet curtains and black, red, and white furnishings. A painting depicts the Devil Moloch with his arms outstretched over his realm of Hell. On the canvas, larvae, lemures, and other lesser beasts of the underworld are being tormented by his infernal minions as his legions prepare for unending war. The painting emanates





Von Klarch Inn Third Floor

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an aura of evil that makes creatures viewing it uncomfortable and has a blasphemous effect: creatures that are not evil-aligned and begin their turn within 10 feet of the painting must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature rolls 1d4 and subtracts the result from any ability check, attack roll, or saving throw they make that turn. An evil collector may pay upward of 500 gp for the painting.

A locked iron chest contains Svan's unholy vestments, his black candles, 4 vials of unholy water, an obsidian holy symbol of Moloch, and a flame-bladed ceremonial dagger that deals double damage to goodly aligned beings. The chest also contains 5 black opals worth 25 gp each, 135 gp, and 233 sp.

35. Velanika Rosnin's Room

Velanika Rosnin currently rents this room. The traps in the room haven't been triggered to dump her into the dungeon as she hasn't yet gathered the silver from her trading expedition to the north.

The room is otherwise similar to others of its type in the inn, with a secret door in the north wall and a **covered pit** concealed in the closet.

36. Trapped Suite

This suite is trapped with a **pit trap** similar to those found throughout the inn. The suite is much nicer than some of the other rooms found within the inn but just as deadly to rich patrons.

37. Lady Elis' Suite

This series of rooms overlooking the gorge are the private chambers of Lady Elis Von Klarch. The door is locked with an *arcane lock* and a traditional lock, which can be opened with a DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

37-A. Greeting Room

The greeting room is a combination of study and lounge. A pair of stuffed leather couches stand around a coffee table, above which hangs an oil-rubbed bronze chandelier lit with ever-burning candles. The western wall is made of stained-glass featuring the images of a golden-robed man with a crown standing upon a stone at the edge of a cliff, unaware that a flock of crows is winging toward his back. Opposite him are the flaming bones of an enormous horned fiend, its jaw open in rage and horror as it stands grasping a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Doors between the panels of stained-glass open onto the balcony overlooking the gorge beyond.

The greeting room has a stocked bar cart that contains 12 bottles of spirits including rum, brandy, whiskey, and schnapps worth 5–10 gp per bottle.

37-B. Bedchamber

Lady Elis' bedchamber occupies the southern wing of her suite. The room features a fireplace, a canopy bed, cherry-wood wardrobes, and stained-glass featuring crows flying over the gorge.

The wardrobes are overstuffed with gowns though the gowns appear to be poorly kept, threadbare, and several years out of fashion. Shoeboxes are piled in the corners and spill around the room, but again the shoes are in most cases a decade or more out of style with the shoes popular among metropolitan aristocrats.

Blank spaces on the walls where the wallpaper is discolored indicate that paintings once hung in these locations. However, one large painting of the Eastern Peaks remains. The painting swings to the side on a nearly invisible hinge to reveal a diagram of the entire inn, complete with the buttons found in Lady Elis' office (**Area 10**) on the ground floor. Lady Elis can control any of the pit traps from here. Noticing the hidden controls requires a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

37-C. Lady Elis' Conjuring Hall

This room to the north of the greeting room is where Lady Elis studies her dark magic. The door is locked with a good lock, as well as an *arcane lock*. If the *arcane lock* is dealt with, the lock can be picked with a DC

17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Bookshelves in the room contain copies of Lady Elis' spellbooks, with 2d6 spells per level of levels 1–4. Characters can also find 10 scrolls containing the following spells: *sleep*, *charm person*, *suggestion*, *charm monster*, *magic missile*, *lightning bolt*, *haste*, *mirror image*, *invisibility*, and *dispel magic*. A shelf holds the following potions: a *potion of healing*, a *potion of lesser restoration*, a *potion of fire resistance*, and a *potion of poison*.

Also found here are 20 pounds of powdered lead in ceramic jars.

A large crystal jar in the center of the room contains what appears to be a semi-formed human baby suspended in a thick jelly-like fluid. The jar is capped with a copper lid and affixed with copper wires. It sits on an iron pedestal in the center of a pentagram drawn with silver dust. An open book lies on a pedestal outside of the pentagram. The book is titled *The Artis Simulacra*.

Within the jar is a partial clone that Lady Elis intends to use as an empty vessel to trap and command Aspdu's spirit. The half-formed clone is designed based on instructions found in the pages of *The Artis Simulacra* (see the **Appendix**) that recently came into Lady Elis' possession. After reading the tome, she believes capturing and enslaving the fiend is the simplest way to overcome her financial hardships. She is now hoping to find the *talisman of Aspdu* to complete the ritual. She suspects Krateis is withholding the location of the talisman as well as her cut of the silver taken from travelers.

Destroying the clone renders it impossible for Aspdu to gain his true form until a new clone is prepared.

Von Klarch Dungeon

A large cave complex beneath the Von Klarch Inn serves as a dungeon for the building above, containing guardrooms and jails, a shrine to Moloch, and the spiked pit traps where unsuspecting guests are unceremoniously dumped.

38. Tower Entrance

Stairs from the ground-floor access hallway between the lounge (**Area 7**) and Gravníc's room (**Area 20**) lead to the dungeon. The stairs open immediately into this guardroom occupied by 2 **guards** loyal to the Von Klarch household. A door to the south leads to the barracks.

39. Guard Barracks

The barracks has three sets of bunkbeds for the 6 guards who typically patrol the dungeons. At least 2 **guards** can be found resting in the barracks at any given time. Each guard has a footlocker containing 2d10 sp and personal effects such as ivory dice, a dish, cup, eating utensils, and a change of clothes.

A set of stairs leads to a short, hidden hallway on the ground floor near the larder (**Area 15**) and a secret door located there.

40. Shrine to the Devil of Murder Cliffs

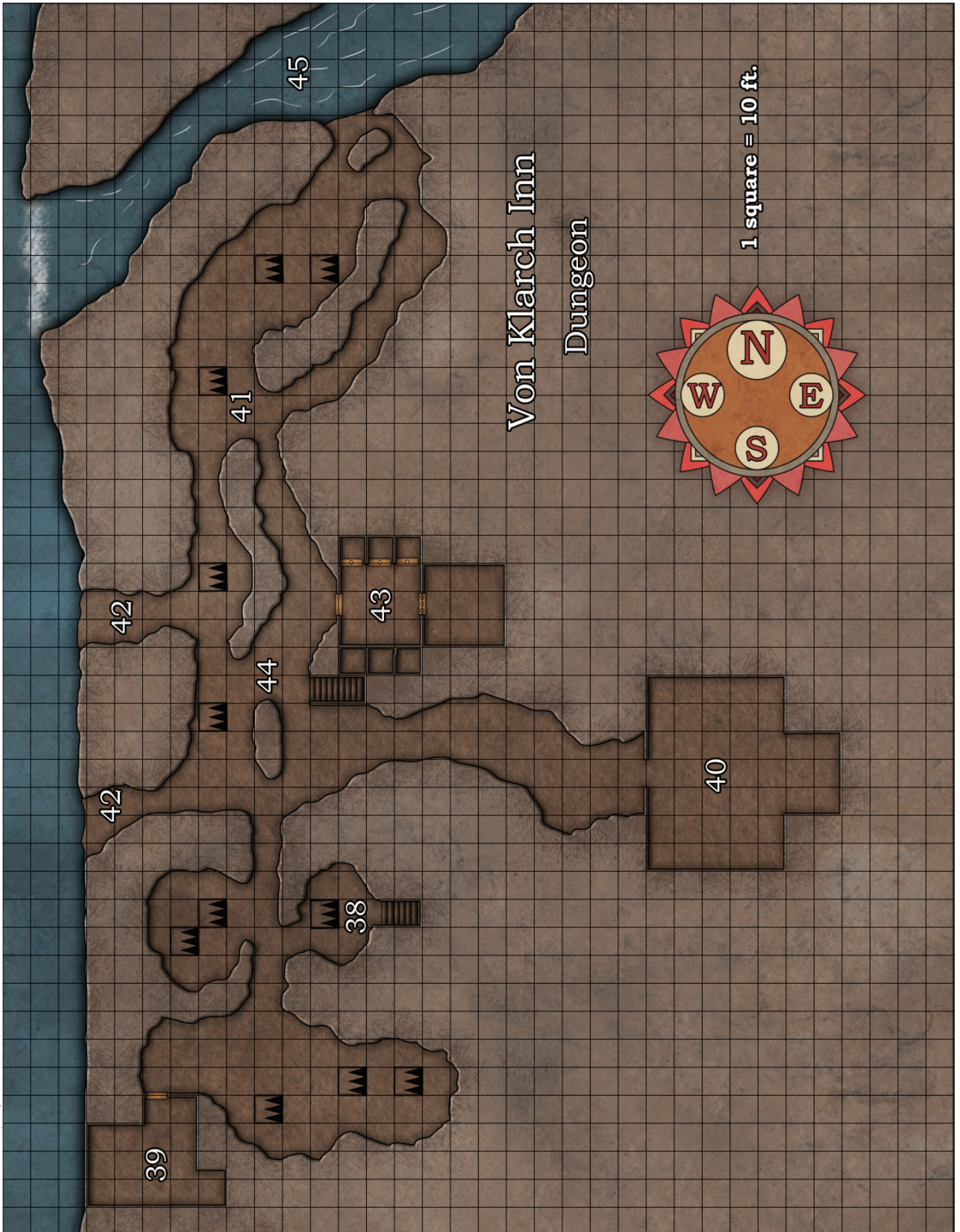
This shrine is dedicated to the Devil of Murder Cliffs. The walls are set with a mosaic featuring the legend of the devil and show a long procession of creatures being sacrificed on a bloody altar. Currently, a blood-encrusted golden idol of Moloch stands upon an altar similar to the one in the mosaic. Svan Dorian recently placed the idol here to channel some of the evil essence of the structure for himself.

The area emanates an intense aura of evil that causes chaotic and good beings to have disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks for the duration of their stay within the shrine. Touching the idol of

Standard Features

Doors: Doors are locked with a good lock, which requires a DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open. Lady Elis and Svan Dorian possess the keys to these doors.

Spikes: Iron, 6-foot spikes line the bottom of the pit traps hidden in the guest rooms above. The spikes may still have pieces of impaled remains or fresh blood on them from recent victims.



THE DEVIL OF MURDER CLIFFS

Moloch summons a **bearded devil** that appears to defend the altar. Once it has done so, it cannot do so again for 24 hours.

The idol is gold-covered clay and is very old. If an evil-aligned cleric touches the idol of Moloch, the creature can use an action to cast one of the following spells: *bestow curse*, *charm person*, *fear*, or *suggestion*. Once it has cast one of these spells, it cannot cast that spell again for 24 hours.

If a creature casts the *dispel evil and good* spell on the idol, its magic is suppressed for 24 hours.

41. Cave

The dungeon of the Von Klarch Inn is built over a large cave complex almost as long as the house itself. Large stone pillars support the tons of rock above and divide the cave into several narrow galleries.

The cave is patrolled by 4 **zombies** made from the corpses of fallen guests. They ignore folk wearing the crest of the Von Klarch estate, but attack anyone else. They are ultimately under the control of Svan Dorian.

42. Cave Opening

These openings in the cliff face overlook the roaring rapids 1,000 feet below. The footing is damp, requiring a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check if a creature attempts anything more strenuous than slowly walking. Any character who slips can make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to attempt to crawl back to safety. If failed, they are dashed on the cliff wall as they fall to their death.

A horde of crows (which use the statistics of a **raven swarm**) rests on the cliffs 50% of the time, and there is a 25% chance that several larger specimens (which use the statistics of a **blood hawk**) rest here as well. The dire corbies and crows ignore folk dressed in the attire of the Von Klarches' servants and staff but caw madly when anyone else approaches.

Murdered victims of the Von Klarch clan are often hurled from the cliffs where their bodies are dashed on the rocks below for the crows to pick apart. Bodies that hit the water are as often as not broken apart by the rapids slamming them back into the rocks.

43. Von Klarch Donjon

The door to the jail is locked with a strong lock and barred from the inside; the lock itself can be picked with a DC 19 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, but if the bar is thrown across the door, the door must be broken down with a DC 25 Strength check. The door can also be chopped down by dealing 20 damage to the door with weapons or spells, which is very loud and obvious. Six prisoner cells are within the smelly cesspit. The chamber is decked out with flensers, braziers and tongs, thumbscrews, and branks. Being held here for ransom are **Genley** (NG male human **noble**), a merchant from Freegate, and **Sir Hamenly** (LG male human **knight**), sent to investigate the random disappearances in the passes along the Murder Cliffs. Both are malnourished and thin and have 4 levels of exhaustion.

Gagaric the Torturer, a cruel man-at-arms, manages the donjon. Gagaric keeps the keys to the cells on his belt. Gagaric uses the statistics of a **bandit captain** but wields a whip (+5 to hit, 5 [1d4 + 3] slashing damage) in place of a dagger.

44. Stairs

A set of stairs leads to the hidden hallway between the bellhop station (**Area 4**) and the supply closet (**Area 6**) on the ground floor.

45. River Cave

This exit from the caves opens to an underground stream. After about 60 feet, the river pours off the side of the cliff as a waterfall that cascades to the river below.

Part 2: To Hunt the Devil

In this section, allow the characters to explore the region as they like although they likely have a goal of finding Krateis and Arcenaur if they are going along with Lady Elis' wishes. Eventually, a captured bandit, successful tracking, or pure luck should lead the characters to Krateis' mountain hideout. Of course, a possessed NPC may very well lead the characters into the wilderness — headed in the direction of the Devil's Dolmen, so Aspdu can reclaim the talisman.

Once the characters discover Krateis' hideout, they'll have to figure out the best way to bring the bandit chieftain to justice. They may also have to deal with the druid Arcenaur (or may believe he has something to do with the attacks on the inn if they believe Lady Elis). Once they complete their mission, they'll need to return to the Von Klarch Inn for their reward. Krateis and Arcenaur may be their prisoners, or the pair may have escaped to make their own way to the inn for vengeance.

The Murder Cliffs . . .

The wilderness area to the east of the Murder Cliffs is a thickly grown alpine forest at around 1,200 feet to 2,500 feet. The climb up to the level of the trail increases travel time by one-third due to the height of the peaks. Lumber camps dot the forest, but it is also home to dangerous gnolls, bandits, and more.

The Murder Cliffs are so named for the preponderance of crows that nest along the cliffs along the river gorge. The area is a wild land, and the mountain roads are narrow and frequently blocked by boulders and rockslides that need to be cleared before passage is possible again.

The tables below detail random encounters that could take place day or night as characters explore the heavy wilderness around the Murder Cliffs. You could also use these encounters to challenge characters as they travel to the Von Klarch Inn.



FROG GOD GAMES

Random Daytime Wilderness Encounters

1d20	Encounter
1	Merchant caravan
2	Holy pilgrimage
3	Owlbears
4	Bears*
5	1d4+2 perytors *
6	Ranger band
7	Wolves*
8	Lumberjacks
9	A murder of crows (1d4 raven swarms)
10	Arcenaur the druid
11	Aspdu's evil spirit
12-20	No Encounter

Random Night-Time Wilderness Encounters

1d20	Encounters
1-2	Gnoll band
2-3	Bandit band
4	Wolves
5	Owlbears
6	Dire corbies
7	Wraith
8	Ranger
9	Murder of crows
10	Arcenaur the druid
11	Aspdu's evil spirit
12-20	No encounter

Arcenaur the Druid: Arcenaur's lair is detailed in **Area G**.
Aspdu's Evil Spirit: See the **Ghost of a Devil** Sidebar above for more details. If Aspdu's ghost has not yet been encountered, the spirit sets upon an unsuspecting character, attempting to possess him or her. The possessed immediately heads toward the Devil's Dolmen (**Area F**) to retrieve the talisman.

Bandit Band: This is an encounter with 2d6+2 **bandits** in allegiance with Krateis. Due to the truce between the gnoll chieftain and Krateis, they are given free passage by any gnolls they meet. There is a 50% chance that the highwaymen are set up to ambush the characters.

Bears: Roll 1d4. The result is the type of bear encountered:

1d4	Type
1-2	Black bear plus 1d2 cubs
2	Brown bear plus 1d2 cubs
4	Dire bear* plus 1d2 cubs

There is a 50% chance that the bear attacks. If the characters avoid a confrontation and stay away from the bear's cubs, they should be fine.

Dire Corbies: These bird-like creatures fly about the wilderness, swooping down upon prey for their meals. These larger than average crows use the statistics of a **blood hawk**.

Gnoll Band: This is an encounter with 2d4 **gnolls** armed with bows, battle axes, or heavy maces, and shields.

Holy Pilgrimage: This is a pilgrimage of 4 **paladin initiates*** and a **priest** en route to the ruins of their ancient temple. The pilgrims invite the characters to eat lunch or dinner with them and indicate their intent to stay in the stables of the Von Klarch Inn due to their oaths of poverty. If the

characters have positive interactions with the paladins, the warriors may come to the characters' rescue later in the adventure at your discretion.

Lumberjack Band: This is an encounter with 2d4 **lumberjacks** heading into the cut or coming back from the cut for a drink at the inn. The lumberjacks use the statistics of **thugs**, except they wield greataxes (+4 to hit, 8 [1d12 + 2] slashing damage).

Merchant Caravan: The merchant caravan consists of 2-4 **guards**, a **merchant** (N male or female human **commoner**), 2-4 wagons, and drivers. The wagons wind their way along the trail.

The merchant has 1d6 x 100 gp in a locked strongbox that can be opened with a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Their wagons are long, four-axle affairs drawn by a team of six draft ponies. There is a 50% chance the wagons are empty and on their way to a lumber camp. If the wagons are full, they are loaded with logs being hauled to the lumber mill.

Murder of Crows: This encounter is with a swarm of overly aggressive and hostile crows near the cliffs. The crows are infested with lice and a flu virus that they, themselves, are immune to but which causes a debilitating illness to those who are pecked by them.

The murders use the statistics of 1d4 **raven swarms**, but if a creature takes damage from them, they must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or contract sewer plague.

Owlbears: This is an encounter with 1d4 + 1 **owlbears** that have come down from the mountaintops in search of easy prey. The owlbears ambush the party unless they are noticed.

Perytors: These encounters take place nearer the Murder Cliffs. The encounter is with 1d4+2 **perytors*** that swoop down using their horror effects to disorient characters as they attack.

Ranger Band: This is an encounter with either Farseekers or Longhunters. The encounters are either with 1d4 + 1 elf **scouts** or 1d4 + 1 human **scouts**.

The ranger bands are hunting gnolls. If the characters have a positive interaction, the rangers may arrive at some later point to offer aid and support.

Wolves: This encounter is with a pack of the wolves. Roll 1d6 to determine the type:

1d6	Type
1-2	2d4+2 wolves
3-4	1d4+1 dire wolves
5-6	1d4+1 worgs

The wolves attack only if the characters were recently wounded and have not yet healed. They otherwise hide and follow the characters, waiting for an opportunity to pick off slow, weak, or wounded characters.

A. Von Klarch Inn

This ancient manor sitting on the banks of the river is the once-proud home of the Von Klarch family. The family, though long in decline, still wields some power in these parts of the wilderness. The ruins of their family home now serve as a bed and breakfast for travelers heading to the fabled treasures of the north, and for merchants and their mercenaries who provide supplies and protection for the lumber camps.

The Von Klarch Inn is detailed in **Part 1: The Arrival**.

B. River Forest Road

The River Forest Road runs parallel to the river. Mostly a lumber camp road for those woodsmen working the cuts along the southern spur of the mountains, the northern reaches of the road are often beset by bandits and disorganized bands of gnolls who are as often at war with one another as they are with the timber barons and their bands of woodcutters.

THE DEVIL OF MURDER CLIFFS



C. Gnoll Encampments

Dotting the mountains are gnoll encampments hidden within caves or built into the ruins of abandoned dwarven outposts. They are all set up in a similar pattern. A sample map is provided, but you may create differing floorplans as needed.

C-1. Game Trail

The path to a gnoll nest often appears as a harmless game trail until the tracks are examined more closely. Even then, the similarity to the foot of a wild dog, large wolf, or hyena makes for an indistinguishable mark except to the expert eye of a trained tracker.

C-2. Watch Post

Small groups of 1d2 + 1 **gnolls** guard these watch posts. The watch post is either on a cliff overlooking the local terrain or is built into a complex of tree stands near the entrance of the encampment.

One of the gnolls at the watch post carries a war horn. All carry composite longbows made from the antlers of deer and elk combined with sinew, yew, or Osage orange that afford great range and deal good damage to enemies caught in their sights.

C-3. Entrance

The entrance to the gnoll lair is typically trapped with a deadfall set to smash an unaware intruder. This rather simple tripwire trap can be noticed with a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check; cutting the wire triggers the trap, however, which can be discovered with a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Once noticed, it can be easily stepped over.

C-4. Gnoll Nests

Each of these nests serves as the personal campsite for a group of 2d4 **gnoll** warriors and their 1d6 + 1 **young** (non-combatants). The

females of the tribe fight as males and are considered equals on the field of battle.

The gnolls have 2d4 pieces of ivory worth 2d6 gp each, as well as 1d4 pelts and furs worth 2d6 gp.

C-5. Kennel

The kennel houses the jackals and hyenas the gnolls keep around as guard animals. The stench is fairly unbearable in this cavern, which is home to 2d4 **hyenas** or 1d2 **giant hyenas**.

C-6. Chieftain's Cave

The largest room in any gnoll lair is the chieftain's nest. The chieftain has 1d4 **gnoll wives** and is protected by 2 bodyguards who are **gnolls** with 40 hit points.

There is a 50% chance that the chieftain keeps prisoners who were ambushed for the treasures they were hauling.

The captive is typically a 3rd-level NPC who could be used to fill out any opening in the characters' group, or they may be used as a jumping-in point for a new player to join the adventure.

The gnoll chieftain uses the statistics of a **veteran**, except for the following:

- * It has the gnoll's Bite attack:

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

- * Instead of a longsword, it wields a +1 **warhammer** (+6 to hit, 8 [1d8 + 4] bludgeoning damage, or 9 [1d10 + 4] bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands) and does not carry a heavy crossbow, preferring the gnoll's longbow (+3 to hit, 5 [1d8 + 1] piercing damage).

- * It has the following feature:

Rampage. When the chieftain reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

FROG GOD GAMES

The gnoll wives are clerics of the gnoll god Crocutus and use the statistics of a **gnoll**, save that they have a Challenge Rating of 1 (200 XP), a Wisdom of 14 (+2), and the following additional feature:

Spellcasting. The gnoll wife is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The gnoll wife has the following cleric spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *resistance*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (3 slots): *bane*, *inflict wounds*, *shield of faith*

Treasure: The gnoll chieftain keeps most of the hoard his band collects. A typical hoard includes 300 gp in coins, a satchel of 20 garnets worth 1 gp each, a silver mirror worth 10 gp, a bearskin worth 100 gp, a suit of elf-sized chainmail, a halfling-sized breastplate, and a pair of good riding boots.

D. Lumber Camps

A lumber camp typically consists of 2d6+4 **lumberjacks** and about 10 **mules**. The camps are set up in a defensible position, usually atop a bluff that offers them a view of any would-be attackers. An overseer serves as the leader of the men. The lumber camps are located closer to the Von Klarch Inn as the northern reaches of the hold have proven too dangerous and therefore costly for the lumber companies of Bard's Gate.

The lumberjacks have recently fallen sway to the local legends of the Devil of Murder Cliffs after seeing a horned figure stalking the night. Other lumberjacks talk about their axes being dull despite having just been sharpened or their axe-handles twisting and breaking. Others have heard tales of the underbrush swallowing men working the cut or of possessed animals attacking their brethren. Superstition abounds, and the overseer may offer the characters a small stipend in food and coin to defend the camp until the lumberjacks load their wagons with another five tons of wood. Their efforts take 1d4 + 1 days, pays 10 gp, and generates the potential of three random encounters from either the daytime or nighttime encounter tables.

The lumberjacks use the statistics of **thugs**, except they wield greataxes (+4 to hit, 8 [1d12 + 2] slashing damage).

The overseer uses the statistics of a **veteran**, except that he wields a greataxe (+5 to hit, 9 [1d12 + 3] slashing damage) in place of a longsword, and can't use his shortsword if using his greataxe.

Treasure: The lumberjacks' treasure includes 10 days of rations in a mixture of dried venison, dried fruits, and wild roots. They have an iron box containing 50 gp and 200 sp that is locked with a (level 3) lock. The money is used to pay for goods and to pay the men. They also have two 20-gallon kegs of ale, 2 tents capable of sleeping six persons each, and 5 tons of fir trees harvested from the surrounding forest.

E. Krateis' Bandit Camp

Krateis' bandit camp contains several permanent wooden structures, a stone tower, and a group of semi-permanent tents atop a castle-like tor surrounded by a dense pine forest. A causeway was built to reach the top of the tor in some ancient time, and it is believed that the tower in the center of the tor was once the keep of some ancient fortress built by a long-forgotten culture.

Krateis' bandits hunt these mountains as their own fiefdom, occasionally battling the gnolls for dominance of the passes. They make their living robbing travelers on their return trip to the Von Klarch Inn, taxing them for passage through the passes. Krateis has a sharp eye and recognizes those who are better armed than himself or his reavers and avoids confrontation with marks who may turn the hunter into the hunted.

E-1. The Ramp

The pass leading to Krateis' camp is a twisted ramp **trapped** in two locations with a hidden tripwire and piles of logs.

Log Traps: The trip-wire traps are well made, if simple. The trip-wire can be noticed with a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check; disabling them requires a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, but failure to disable the traps causes them to be sprung. If either trap is triggered, all creatures within a 20-foot cube, its edge on the creature who triggered it, are pummeled by an avalanche of logs. Creatures in the area must make a

DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful saving throw.

E-2. The Gate

The palisade gate is made of bound wooden logs. A pair of **bandits** stand sentry in 15-foot-high limestone towers to either side of the gate guard the entrance and keep an eye on the ramp.

E-3. Tents

The semi-permanent tents are made of canvas but are timbered up to 3 feet high and have plank floors. Each tent contains four canvas-and-wood camp beds and sleeps four **bandits**.

During daylight hours, most bandits are on patrol somewhere in the mountain passes. During the evening, there is a 50% chance they are sleeping in their tent or out drinking near one of the cabins.

E-4. Blacksmith's Cabin

Shimek (N male half-orc **veteran**), the camp's blacksmith, calls this camp his headquarters. Shimek has been with Krateis for as long as he can remember, and brought his wife and grown sons with him in support of his captain.

Shimek is intensely loyal to Krateis. His specialty is crafting hand axes of extremely hard and very sharp steel.

E-5. Corral

The bandits keep their stock of horses in the corral. Currently, 34 **horses** are in the corral. These are mountain ponies with the same statistics as a warhorse. They are surefooted and capable of moving through the steep, narrow trails of the forest with little difficulty. Two **bandits** watch the corral.

E-6. Storehouse

The bandits keep contraband they plan to sell on the black market in this storehouse. Currently, there are 4 barrels of molasses, 2 kegs of rum, 20 hanging hams, two 50-pound barrels of corned beef, six crates of average wine, two barrels of whale oil worth 150 gp each, 30 sacks of flour, 50 pounds of sugar, two barrels of apples, and 100 pounds of pine nuts. Most items can be sold for 20% under current market value. **Antun** (LE male dwarf **bandit captain**), a hard-hearted dwarven quartermaster, runs the storehouse. He is at the storehouse from noon to sundown unless the company is on a raid.

A locked iron chest contains 200 pounds of silver bars worth 1,000 gp on the market. The silver was taken from a recent raid on a silver caravan that was leaving the northern mines and is a bone of contention between Krateis and Lady Elis.

The lock on the chest, which only Antun and Krateis have keys to, can be opened with a DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Antun keeps the stores locked and sleeps on a cot that he pulls in front of the storeroom. The stores can be unlocked with a DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

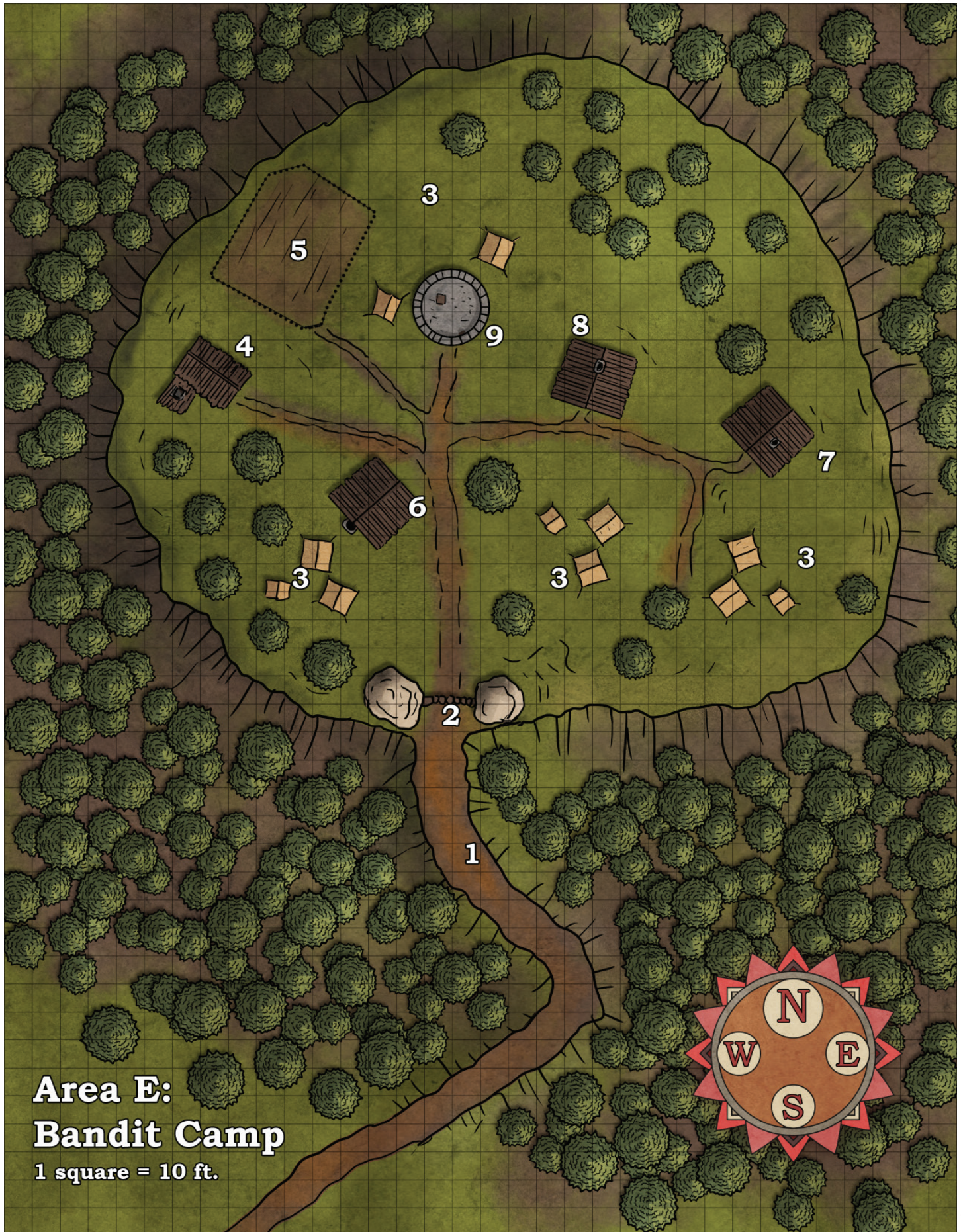
E-7. Mess Hall

This mess hall for the rank-and-file bandits is where they are served meals of venison, beans, wild potatoes, and onion. The mess hall is open twice a day. Any sought-after food must be gathered from the quartermaster at the storehouse. **Chef Gia Gaguri** (LE male human **bandit**), a tough bandit who can turn just about anything into a hearty meal, prepares and serves the food. When on raids, Gia Gaguri makes sure the bandits hit up food stores to ensure that they avoid starving upon their mountaintop.

E-8. Officers' Quarters

This log cabin serves as the bunkhouse for Krateis' officers.

Bunks and footlockers store the belongings of Gaguri, Antun, Dusana, and Lujub.



Dusana and Lujub are a brother and sister pair of mounted archers who have served Krateis since they were children. They each command a contingent of Krateis' raiders that is composed of around 10 horsemen. There is a 25% chance that they are in the officers' quarters after dark. Otherwise, they wander the hilltop checking on the bandits or are out on a raid.

The officers have their own ale keg that contains about 10 gallons of brew. They are allowed to partake as much as they wish so long as they maintain order among the bandits.

Footlockers: Each footlocker is locked with a good lock, which requires a DC 14 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to unlock, and the keys are found with the owners.

Footlocker 1: Gia Gaguri's footlocker contains a set of silverware worth 10 gp, one setting of cups, a saucer, a bowl, bread, and a plate of bone china worth 5 gp, and a sack with 190 gp, two sapphires worth 50 gp each, a *potion of heroism*, and a hard block of fine cheese worth 5 gp.

Footlocker 2: Antun's footlocker contains a cleaver taken off a dead orc that is enchanted as a +1 *battleaxe* in the hands of an orc or half-orc, a *potion of invisibility*, a *potion of climbing*, a sack containing 150 gp, 300 sp, an aquamarine worth 50 gp, a pair of dice carved from the metatarsals of an ogre worth 10 gp, and an old steel helmet affixed with a dyed red roach comb that runs perpendicular to the faceplate.

Footlocker 3: Dusana's footlocker contains a spare suit of studded leather that looks common, a pair of silvered shortwords, a *potion of healing*, and a sack containing 200 gp, a pair of 50 gp emeralds, a 200 gp diamond, and a *scroll of raise dead*.

Footlocker 4: Lujub's footlocker contains a spare suit of leather armor, a longsword, five silvered arrows, two gut bow strings, a sack with 150 gp, a large citrine worth 100 gp, and a bottle of rotgut moonshine worth 15 gp.

E-9. Limestone Tower

This old tower is spotted with greenish patches of fungus and algae. The tower appears to be three stories tall and is affixed with an ironbound oaken door that appears to be newer than the rest of the building. Windows on the north and south of the tower look across the plateau to the wooded valleys north and south of the bandit encampment.

Ground Floor:

The ground floor has a hearth, table, and chairs. A complete iron cookware set hangs over the fire. An extensive map of the back trails and woodlands areas, including the various gnomish encampments, hangs on the wall and is marked with chalk for areas to avoid and places along the trail where prospectors are most likely to be ambushed.

Second Floor:

The second floor serves as Krateis' storeroom for the loot he has helped himself to along the way. An examination of the chests and wardrobes in this small tower room indicates some odd predilections of the bandit lord. He likes very old things and seems to have a fixation with the region.

Among books on warfare, strategy, and the repatriation and redistribution of wealth is a book titled *The Leaden Devil*.

The meaning of the manuscript is up to the interpretation of the reader and should serve more to add another layer of mystery to the adventure.

A map shows the location of the Devil's Dolmen. Written across it in Krateis' handwriting are the words "Devil's Hour, Innocent Sacrifice, Horned Moon."

A successful DC 15 Intelligence check reveals that the Devil's Hour is between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. The horned moon refers to either waxing gibbous or waxing crescent moons. For the purposes of the adventure, such a moon can be seen on one of the Lost Lands' two moons during the characters' visit to the Murder Cliffs. A two-quart cask contains 75 gp worth of dwarven whiskey, while a chest contains five silk dresses worth 50 gp each. A second box contains 10 pairs of ladies' shoes worth 25 gp per pair. The sizes are all outlandishly large and wide. There is a makeup kit worth 25 gp, and six hat boxes with fine silk hats of various sizes and shapes featuring beadwork, feathers, pearls, and the like worth about 10 gp each.

Molyvus Diabolos: The Leaden Devil

In ages past, a tricky devil walked the lands in the guise of a wealthy merchant, tempting those who would take his bargain of power and glory in exchange for the taste of a traveler's mortal soul. Being a very clever devil, the fiend was careful not to reveal his true nature until the time the contract was up. One traveler took up the deal and quickly gained riches and wealth. Enough, in fact, to buy land and title. Of course, the road to riches did not come easy, and as often as not, it involved a high degree of theft, graft, and murder to accomplish the traveler's goal.

To avoid paying the cost of his soul, however, the traveler sought a second bargain with the now-revealed fiend who had arrived to collect his debt. If he could but exchange other souls for his own wretched one, could he not forestall the inevitable damnation that was to come? Being a clever devil, the fiend thought on this and agreed. For every fresh and unsullied soul the traveler could turn to damnation, the applicant could apply for another year of life.

Thus, the new-made lord set about his task while also formulating a plan to keep his life, his lands, and his wealth, while ridding himself of the fiend who had led him to his riches. The lord spent his time studying the mysteries of the arcane, all the while faithfully making offerings in a shrine built for the worship of his fiendish patron.

Eventually, the lord came upon a ritual that would break the fiend's grasp upon his soul. The lord created a hollow vessel made in the shape of a newborn child. Within the vessel he placed a trap that would bind the devil and force him to relinquish the lord's contract. As he passed the child into the fiend's hands, the fiend realized the trap. The devil exploded in fury after releasing his prey, leaving his leaden bones blasted across the mountainside above the cavern where the lord had kept his shrine.

The lord then took the accursed vessel, and as his last act, he hurled the newborn simulacrum from the cliffs. As he did so, a murder of crows rose up from the cliffs and descended upon the lord in a cacophony of caws. Blinded and flailing, the lord slipped upon the wet rocks and tumbled into the gorge below and was never seen again.

Since that time, other lords have come and gone, kingdoms have risen and fallen just like the rising of the tides, and control of the Murder Cliffs has changed hands a dozen times between men, dwarves, elves, orcs, and gnolls. Whatever became of the old lord has been lost to time though the proof that the devil walked the cliffs lies on the western peak with its leaden bones emblazoned in the stone. Some say the fiend's diabolical spirit still stalks the spaces in between the earth and the hells, searching for the one who betrayed it.

Third Floor, Krateis' Room:

A locked door opens to Krateis' room. Opening it requires a DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Krateis room is well appointed with a canopy bed, silk and satin sheets, a wardrobe, dressing table, and other finery that seems out of place in the ancient pile of limestone that makes up the tower and even more out of place for the rawboned figure of a feared bandit chieftain.

A locked case is hidden under the bed. The lock is trapped with a poison needle trap. Opening the chest without the proper key causes the needle to spring out, delivering a dose of poison. When the trap is triggered, the needle extends 3 inches out from the lock. A creature within range takes 1 piercing damage and 5d8 poison damage, and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to deduce the trap's presence from alterations made to the lock. A successful DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disarms the trap, removing the needle from the lock. Unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock triggers the trap.

THE DEVIL OF MURDER CLIFFS

Within the case are Krateis' spellbooks that contain his memorized spells plus two 1st-level spells and two 2nd-level spells, 424 sp, 211 gp, a string of pearls worth 100 gp, a set of three very large gold rings affixed with princess-cut diamonds worth 150 gp each, a *potion of lesser restoration*, a *potion of protection from evil and good*, and a silver shortsword.

Running the Bandit Camp

The bandits only focus on their guard duty at the gate as it is largely the only entrance to the camp. Otherwise, security is lax unless a horn sounds, which causes the bandits in the camp to form up ranks with their various captains and await instruction from Krateis if he happens to be available.

In this event, Dusana and Lujub each take a platoon of 15 **bandits**, with Gia Gaguri joining Dusana, and Shimek joining Lujub as sub-captains. Antun and his 2 men stay behind to guard the storehouse from attack.

Dusana and Gia move to guard the corral, while Lujub and Shimek move to guard the pass into the camp. If the camp is already breached, they move to the parade grounds around the tower, with Lujub and 5 men staying at the tower and Shimek directing two 5-men patrols to scout the perimeter.

Dusana and Lujub use the statistics of a **bandit captain**, save that both prefer to use longbows (+5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., 7 [1d8 + 3] piercing damage). They can make two ranged attacks with their longbows using their Multiattack ability.

Krateis (see the **Appendix**) arrives to take command two rounds after a horn sounds.

Krateis, Lujub, and Dusana fight to 50% of their health before they surrender. If Krateis surrenders, his band surrenders as well. The bandits surrender if they lose more than 50% of their force (around 16 bandits).

Krateis always assumes surrender is a path to escape. Besides, surrender puts him closer to Lady Elis and an opportunity to charm his way back into her good graces or possibly to murder Svan Dorian.

F. Devil's Dolmen

The pair of high peaks looming over the Murder Cliffs are called the Devil's Dolmen. The relatively difficult climb requires a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check and takes six hours. Failed checks mean no progress is made for one hour.

At the top of the mountain is a flattened plateau that looks as if it were artificially sheared off in some forgotten time. In the center of the plateau is a circle of stones about 3 feet tall. A taller stone at the northern end of the plateau stands 10 feet tall and is made from a shiny black horn of obsidian. Within the center of the circle of stones is the blasted skeletal remains of a large figure that appears to be an admixture of reptilian, bovine, and humanoid. The figure may have been 20 feet tall with a wingspread close to 30 feet. The bones are imbedded in the rock face of the mountaintop and appear to be coated in thick lead. The entire area is devoid of life, insomuch as not even a fleck of lichen grows upon the mountaintop. The area seems sick with the sense of evil, and visitors must make DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be poisoned until they take a long rest; because of the palpable aura of evil, taking a long rest here is impossible.

The standing stones are aligned so that standing by a stone during the Devil's Hour (between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m.) causes the bones to glow bright red and a pathway to open that leads into the mountainside through a red archway of hellish fire.

The rocky pathway travels roughly 1,500 feet downward into the mountainside to an ancient and unholy shrine. Within the shrine are the fastidiously stacked bones of hundreds of men, women, and children that appear to have been encased in lead. A stone altar covered in dried blood stands before a 15-foot-wide pit of indeterminate depth that glows with a reddish light and smells of brimstone and death.

A venomous conflation of molten lead and sulfuric fumes escapes the pit, forcing a creature within 10 feet of the pit to make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be stunned for 1 minute. After 1 minute, if the creature remains within 10 feet of the pit, the creature must make another DC 18 Constitution saving throw to take a level of exhaustion. This repeats as long as the creature remains in the area, repeating the saving throw at the end of each minute. A creature who succeeds on a

saving throw ends the stunned effect early, allowing it to act; levels of exhaustion must be removed normally, however. Hanging over the hole is a 10-foot-wide stone cauldron attached to 100 feet of heavy bronze chain wrapped around a large winch. Inside the cauldron, held immobile to the base of the stone by an invisible bubble of magical force, is the *talisman of Aspdu*. No amount of magic or force can destroy the bubble holding the talisman to the stone cauldron. See below for the ways characters might free the talisman.

Hell Pit

The cauldron can be lowered 100 feet into the hell pit before the stone base touches a portal of blazing hellfire blocking the shaft. Up to 2 characters could ride down into the pit. Incredible heat radiates off the fiery portal as they near it, but anyone remaining inside the stone cauldron does not suffer any damage.

Anyone foolish enough to actually touch the portal takes 17 (5d6) fire damage and must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is drawn into the sixth plane of Hell ruled by Moloch. Characters find themselves as prisoners on Moloch's plane — a flat, stinking place of acrid smoke and soot — unable to leave unless they find a gate out or can bargain with the duke of Hell for their freedom.

Retrieving the *talisman of Aspdu* can be accomplished in a few different ways.

First, a humanoid can be sacrificed on the altar above, then the body lowered into the hell pit during the Devil's Hour. The cauldron fills with blood as hellfire consumes the sacrifice. The *talisman of Aspdu* floats to the surface and can be winched back to the top of the pit and removed from the cauldron.

Second, characters can willingly sacrifice at least 30 hit points of blood (either from a single character or a combination) and pour it over the altar during the Devil's Hour. The stone cauldron fills with blood as before but rises from the cauldron as a **blood golem*** and attacks. The talisman floats inside the golem's form.

Third, any being possessed by the ghost of Aspdu may enter the cauldron, descend, and reach through the magical bubble to collect the talisman without suffering any damage whatsoever. The cauldron must be touching the blazing portal before the possessed character can retrieve the talisman.

G. Arcenaur's Lair

This cave hidden among the alpine cliffs is home to the druid Arcenaur, who is angry at the imbalance of the Murder Cliffs. He sees the creeping evil as a sign of the imbalance, and the clear cutting of the foresters and the incursion of gnolls as a threat to nature. Thus, Arcenaur has taken it upon himself to ambush bandits, gnolls, and foresters alike with equal abandon.

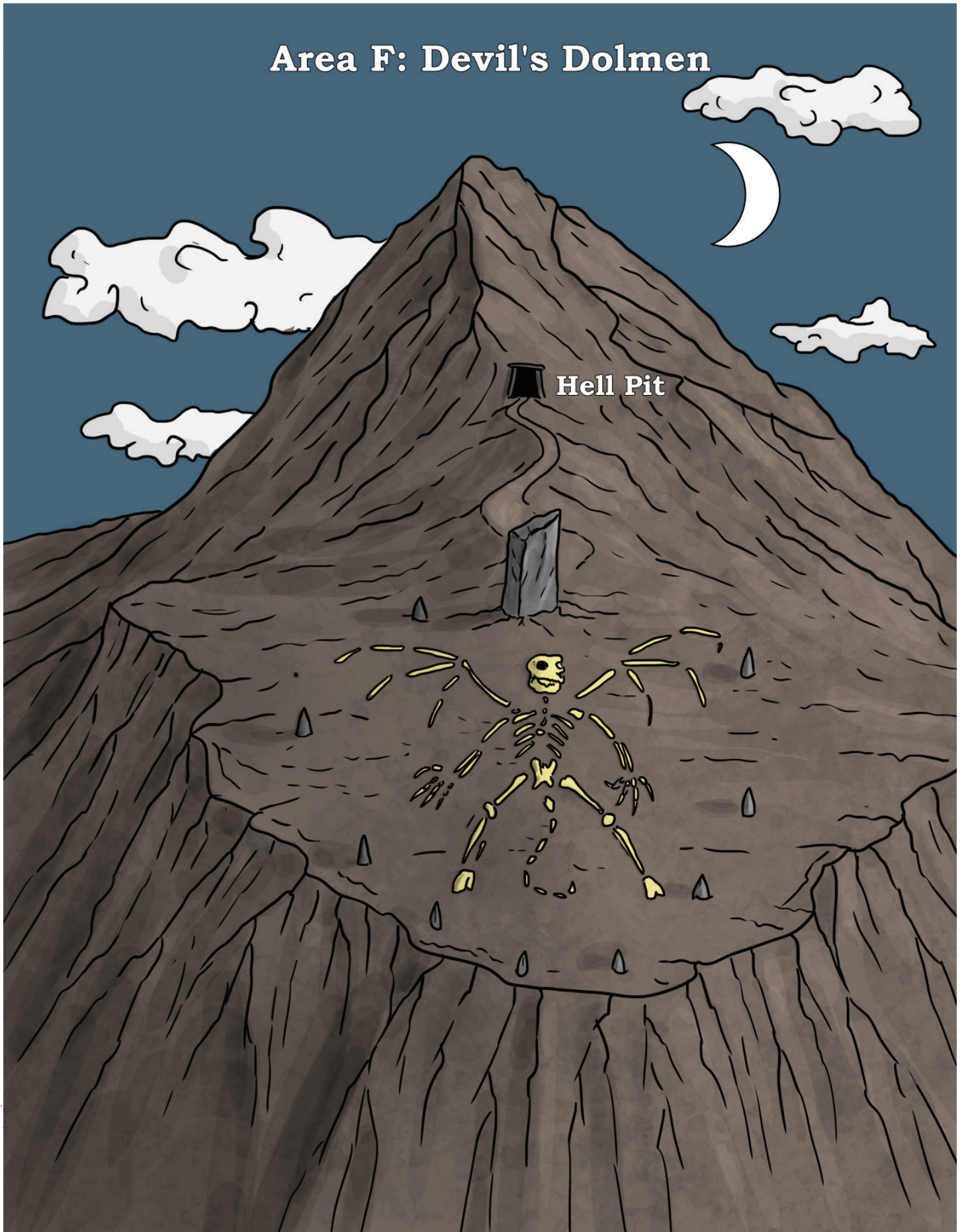
Arcenaur wears a headdress made from the skull of a red deer that gives him a frightful appearance as he roams the mountains. He is known to take various animal forms and tends to hunt his foes when they are most vulnerable, such as during bathroom breaks or when they become separated from a larger host.

There is a 20% chance that Arcenaur is encountered in his lair.

Arcenaur is sure that the evil spirit of Aspdu haunts the region of the Murder Cliffs and has for a long time.

If the characters manage to have a positive encounter with Arcenaur, he shares what he knows of the legend of Aspdu and how the devil relates to the Murder Cliffs. If the characters have not yet seen the devil's bones, he gives them directions and warns them of the dangers of the place.

Area F: Devil's Dolmen



Part 3: The Devil Among Us

This part of the adventure takes place back at the Von Klarch Inn after the characters return from their missions in **Part 2: To Hunt the Devil**. There are a lot of potential moving parts in the adventure, especially during the third act. Ultimately, how these situations play out depends entirely on the actions of the characters and your guidance. With that in mind, what follows is a list of conditions and events that may transpire based on possible actions the characters have taken. They are provided to help you decide how to bring about an exciting end to the adventures of the Murder Cliffs!

Conditions and Events

The following conditions and events are triggered depending on the characters' actions.

Conditions

Several conditions guide the events of Part 3:

If Krateis and/or Arcenaur are Captured Alive: If he is captured alive, Krateis and any of his surviving band are locked in the northern third-floor guard tower (**Area 31-A**). If he is taken alive, Arcenaur is locked in the southern third-floor guard tower (**Area 31-B**). The characters are invited to **Dinner** (see events below), and any dinner events take place. While the characters are at dinner with Lady Elis, each of the prisoners overpowers his guards and escapes.

Krateis does not immediately make his escape. Instead, he hides in the inn long enough to murder Svan Dorian and anyone else who gets in his way.

Arcenaur assumes an animal form and tries to escape from the inn at the first opportunity.

If Krateis is Killed: If the characters bring back the head of Krateis, they are invited to **Dinner** (see events below) where they are to receive their award.

If Arcenaur is Killed: If the characters bring back the head of Arcenaur, they are invited to **Dinner** (see below) where they are to receive their partial reward. In this circumstance, Lady Elis intends to use the death of Arcenaur as a warning to Krateis to mend his ways and pay her what he owes.

If the Characters Accidentally Discover Lady Elis' Dark Secrets: If the characters get snoopy before they set out to apprehend Krateis, proceed to **What Possessed You?** If they are discovered snooping around the house after this time, Lady Elis, Svan Dorian, and the retainers do whatever they can to expel the characters from the home or to kill them. Skip **Dinner** and go directly to **What Possessed You?**

The following events occur once the characters return to the inn and are based on conditions that occur as detailed above.

Dinner

Upon their return, the characters are invited to a feast to celebrate their successes that takes place in the dining hall (**Area 13**).

During dinner, the characters are congratulated for their deeds, and a chest of riches equal to the amount offered in bounty for their activities is proffered.

Besides the characters, other guests at the dinner include the following NPCs: Lady Elis, Svan Dorian, Old Orlak, and Velanika Rosnin. Speeches are given, and wine is consumed. Keep track of which characters partake of the wine and which do not. The wine is not drugged, but it is strong. A character can have up to their Constitution modifier in glasses (which are liberally refilled); after this number, a character must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 8 hours. For each drink after this, repeat the saving throw, increasing the DC by 2 for each drink. On a failed saving throw, the character falls unconscious.

If Krateis or Arcenaur are alive, they escape at some point during the dinner but after the characters who choose to drink wine do so. Gravnica comes in and lets Lady Elis know the prisoner(s) have escaped, at which

point she immediately flies into a rage. She orders the prisoners to be found, screaming at her men-at-arms to search the house and grounds. This is detailed in **The Search** below.

If Krateis and Arcenaur are dead, or if neither was taken prisoner, proceed instead to **Goodnight Friends**.

The Search

During the search of the house, you may place Krateis or Arcenaur anywhere on the second or third floors of the house. Using a separate map, you should move the escapees around as they try to stay hidden. The escapees each have a goal: Arcenaur wants to escape, while Krateis is intent on murdering his rival Svan Dorian before he tries to escape to raise a new army of bandits to eventually take the inn.

During the search, Aspdu's spirit makes his presence known as he uses the confusion to possess NPCs so he can murder residents of the inn. See **What Possessed You?** for more details.

Goodnight Friends

After the dinner, the characters are led upstairs to upgraded rooms on the third floor. As these suites are more spacious, the characters are offered their own suites. The characters may instead wish to share rooms, which is perfectly all right with the staff. Lady Elis would rather avoid any suspicion.

At this point, the Von Klarch clan reveals its true colors. They have no intention of letting their wealth fall into the characters' hands! Lady Elis sends an invitation to individual characters inviting them to her chambers for a nightcap. The actual intent is to cast *charm person* on those invitees and then send them to "explore" the closet of their room. Of course, this leads to characters falling through the trapdoors onto the spikes in the dungeon below.

Characters who choose to sleep alone are attacked in the night by Gravnica, Svan Dorian, and a squad of house soldiers. They seize sleeping characters and attempt to hurl them down the hidden pit traps and onto the spikes in the dungeon below. Svan Dorian casts *silence* before unlocking the doors, giving his gang of murderers a stealthy advantage. Once the individual characters are dealt with, the band of murderers moves on to larger groups.

Just as this nighttime attack is happening, the ghost of Aspdu possesses an NPC and attempts to either steal the talisman (if it is in the inn by this point) or retrieve the talisman from the Devil's Dolmen. The spirit seeks to cause as much chaos and bloodshed as possible.

As soon as any fighting breaks out, see **All Hell Breaks Loose**.

What Possessed You?

Aspdu's ghost now stalks the lands and is attracted to the inn due to Svan Dorian's devil worship. If characters become separated or go snooping on their own, they may encounter Aspdu's ghost at your discretion. In this event, Aspdu's spirit attempts to dominate and possess the character. If it successfully possesses a character, it guides him to the *talisman of Aspdu*, which may still be at the Devil's Dolmen in the Murder Cliffs. If one of the other characters already has the talisman, the possessed character attempts to steal it so Aspdu can use it to enter the clone in Lady Elis' Conjuring Hall (**Area 37-C**).

Aspdu's ghost is tricky and deceptive and attempts to lead other characters into traps throughout the inn. This gives you an opportunity to really mess with the characters. Ultimately, Aspdu has designs on recovering his talisman and taking custody of the empty vessel.

All Hell Breaks Loose

This event assumes all-out combat between the characters and the residents of the inn. This should be fun and as chaotic as possible. Use the GM's map to determine where various NPCs and characters are and move them as desired. If characters cross paths with NPCs, an encounter occurs.

For example, unless Aspdu's ghost has possessed Velanika Rosnin, she and her men remain neutral unless attacked. They merely try to barrel their way out of the inn and to their wagons to escape. Velanika moves from either the dining area or her rooms to gather her men and then heads for the wagons.

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As this is going on, any surviving gnolls and bandits converge on the household. Add 1d4 of either as necessary to keep the action going.

Meanwhile, Aspdu's ghost possesses whomever he can and leads the victims to slaughter as the spilled blood increases his strength! This means Aspdu may jump from character to character.

If the talisman is present, Aspdu seeks to take custody of an NPC or character so they can retrieve the talisman and place it around the neck of the clone growing in the vat within Lady Elis' conjuring hall (**Area 37-C**). If this happens, Aspdu assumes his true form as a **pit fiend** in 2d4 rounds as he grows from a half-formed baby to a full-sized devil! At that point, the pit fiend tears through the house looking for Lady Elis, whom he kills if she is not already dead. He then uses his powers to set the inn on fire. For the most part, he ignores the characters and others unless they are in his way or if they openly attack him.

Once Lady Elis is killed and the inn is in flames, Aspdu opens a gate and returns to his master Moloch, leaving a smoking crater and a pool of molten lead in his wake and the characters with one hell of a story to tell.

Fighting the Ghost: The evil spirit of Aspdu can be fought as if he were any other ghost. If defeated, Aspdu's spirit returns to the hell pit (Area F) to reform over 3d10 days. Defeating the ghost, destroying the clone, or returning the talisman of Aspdu to the hell pit are all ways to temporarily defeat Aspdu. Destroying the talisman may prove a quest unto itself and likely requires the power of a relic or a holy dragon to devour it. That said, it is unlikely that the characters can truly defeat Aspdu at this time.

Wrapping up the Adventure

Ultimately, the adventure ends when Lady Elis and Svan Dorian are defeated. Krateis, Arcenaur, Velanika, and other NPCs may return in future adventures as foes or allies of the characters.

Appendix

NPCs

Krateis

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (+1 breastplate, devil's helm)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +7, Perception +4, Performance +4

Damage Resistances cold

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages any three languages

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Special Equipment. Krateis wears the *devil's helm* and wields a *frost brand greatsword*. He wears a +1 *breastplate* and a pair of *boots of striding and springing*.

Arcane Strike. When Krateis hits with a weapon attack, he can expend a spell slot to cause the weapon attack to deal an additional 16 (3d10) force damage. If he expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d10 for each level above 1st.

Sidestep. Krateis can take a bonus action on his turn to take the Disengage or Dash action.

Spellcasting. Krateis is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (DC 15 spell save, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *feather fall*, *shield*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *mirror image*

3rd level (2 slots): *counterspell*, *haste*

Actions

Multiattack. Krateis makes two attacks with his greatsword.

Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage, plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Lady Elis

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (17 with mage armor)

Hit Points 82 (15d8 + 15)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +6, History +7, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +6

Damage Resistances fire

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Special Equipment. Lady Elis wears a pair of *bracers of defense* and a *ring of fire resistance*, carries with her a *potion of invisibility*, a *potion of fly*, and a *potion of climbing*, as well as a +1 *dagger*. Finally, she carries a *wand of paralysis*.

Enchanter (3/day). Whenever a creature makes a saving throw against one of Lady Elis' enchantment spells, Lady Elis can cause the creature to reroll the saving throw, using the lower of the two results.

Spellcasting. Lady Elis is a 13th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (DC 15 spell save, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *firebolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *hold person*, *invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *hypnotic pattern*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *blight*, *confusion*

5th level (2 slots): *dominate person*, *hold monster*

6th level (1 slot): *eyebite*

7th level (1 slot): *prismatic spray*

Actions

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or ranged 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

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Svan Dorian

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (+1 chain shirt)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +6

Skills Deception +4, Insight +6, Medicine +6, Perception +6, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Special Equipment. Svan carries a +1 mace and wears a +1 chain shirt.

Devilish Eminence. As a bonus action, Svan can expend a spell slot to cause his melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) fire damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If Svan expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. Svan is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (DC 14 spell save, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *guidance*, *mending*, *produce flame*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *command*, *hellish rebuke*, *protection from evil and good*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *aid*, *blindness/deafness*, *hold person*, *lesser restoration*, *silence*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *bestow curse*, *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *locate creature*, *wall of fire*

5th level (2 slots): *insect plague*, *planar binding*

Actions

Multiattack. Svan makes two attacks with his mace.

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Sacrificial Offering. Whenever Svan reduces a creature to 0 hit points, he can destroy the body entirely. Svan regains a 1st-level spell slot and the creature cannot be returned to life save by magic such as *true resurrection* or *wish*, as the soul is offered to Moloch.

Orlak

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (studded leather)

Hit Points 100 (12d10 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +9

Skills Nature +6, Perception +7, Stealth +9, Survival +7

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Any two languages

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Special Equipment. Orlak carries a +1 shortsword as well as 2 potions of healing.

Favored Enemy. Orlak has two groups of favored enemies, chosen from the following list: aberration, beasts, celestials, constructs, dragons, elementals, fey, fiends, giants, monstrosities, oozes, plants, or undead. The warden gains advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track his favored enemies as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them. In addition, when Orlak hits with a weapon attack on a favored enemy, he can deal an additional 10 (3d6) damage to the target of the attack.

Keen Hearing and Sight. The warden has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks related to hearing or sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The warden can make two attacks each round with either longbow or longsword.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Arcenaur

Medium humanoid (half-elf), neutral

Armor Class 15 (+1 hide armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Int +2, Wis +5

Skills Animal Handling +5, Medicine +2, Nature +2, Perception +5, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Druidic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Special Equipment. Arcenaur wears a set of +1 hide armor and wields a +1 scimitar.

Spellcasting. Arcenaur is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (DC 13 spell save, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following druid spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *mending*, *produce flame*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *entangle*, *speak with animals*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *find traps*, *heat metal*, *pass without trace*, *spider climb*, *spike growth*

3rd level (2 slots): *conjure animals* (2 **dire wolves**), *lightning bolt*, *meld into stone*

Actions

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Change Shape (2/short or long rest). Arcenaur magically polymorphs into a beast or elemental with a challenge rating of 1 or less and can remain in this form for up to 2 hours. Arcenaur can choose whether his equipment falls to the ground, melds with his new form, or is worn by the new form. He reverts to his true form if he dies or falls unconscious, or if he uses a bonus action on his turn to end the effect.

While in a new form, Arcenaur retains his game statistics and ability to speak, but his AC, movement modes, Strength, and Dexterity are replaced by those of the new form, and

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he gains any special senses, proficiencies, traits, actions, and reactions (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but that he lacks. He cannot cast spells in this form.

Paladin Initiate

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 19 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +2, Cha +4

Skills Athletics +5, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Divine Smite. When the paladin initiate hits with a melee weapon attack, it can expend a spell slot to deal additional radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 9 (2d8) for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 4 (1d8) for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 21 (5d8). The damage increases by 4 (1d8) if the target is a fiend or undead.

Paladin Training. The paladin initiate adds 1 to its Armor Class (included in its statistics).

Spellcasting. The paladin initiate is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (DC 12 spell save, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following paladin spells prepared.

1st level (2 slots): *cure wounds*, *protection from evil and good*, *shield of faith*

Actions

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if wielded with two hands.

Monsters

Blood Golem

Large aberration, neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities fire, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Amorphous. The blood golem can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Berserk. When the blood golem starts its turn with 40 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk.

On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the blood golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

The golem's creator, if within 60 feet of the berserk golem, can try to calm it by speaking firmly and persuasively. The golem must be able to hear its creator, who must take an action to make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds, the golem ceases being berserk. If it takes damage while still at 40 hit points or fewer, the golem might go berserk again.

Blood Ooze. The blood golem takes up its entire space. Other creatures can enter the space, but a creature that does so is subjected to the blood golem's Engulf and has disadvantage on the saving throw.

Creatures inside the blood golem can't be seen and have total cover.

A creature within 5 feet of the blood golem can take an action to pull a creature or object out of the cube. Doing so requires a successful DC 12 Strength check, and the creature making the attempt takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

The blood golem can hold only one Large creature or up to four Medium or smaller creatures inside it at a time.

Blood Sense. The blood golem can magically sense the presence of blood in living creatures up to 1 mile away. It knows the general direction they're in but not their exact locations.

Blood Splatter. Any time the golem is hit in combat, a gout of blood erupts from its body. All creatures within 10 feet of the golem must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the end of the creature's next turn.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Split. When a blood golem reaches its maximum hit points for its Hit Dice, it splits into two identical golems. Each golem has hit points equal to half the maximum hit points of the original golem. New golems are one size smaller than the original golem.

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 22 (4d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (3d6 + 4) necrotic damage; its hit point maximum is reduced by the amount equal to the necrotic damage, and the blood golem regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction in the target's hit point maximum lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Engulf. The blood golem moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter Large or smaller creatures' spaces. Whenever the blood golem enters a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw.

On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the blood golem. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw.

On a failed save, the blood golem enters the creature's space, and the creature takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage at the start

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of each of the blood golem's turns. When the blood golem moves, the engulfed creature moves with it. An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 12 Strength check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the blood golem.

Dire Bear

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Smell. The dire bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The dire bear makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claw.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Peryton

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17(+3)	16(+3)	17(+3)	11(+0)	12(+1)	10(+0)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages understands Common but cannot speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dive. If the peryton is flying and dives at least 30 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with either its gore attack or with its talons, the attack does an extra 9 (2d8) damage to the target.

Flyby. The peryton doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of the reach of an enemy.

Keen Sight and Smell. The peryton has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The peryton makes one gore attack and one talon attack.

Gore. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Talons. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Magic Items

Bowl of Scrying

Wondrous item, very rare

This *bowl of scrying* can cast the *scrying* spell (save DC 17), as long as you are standing over it and pour 100 gp worth of quicksilver, which is expended when you cast the spell.

Devil's Helm

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

This magical helm bears a fearsome, devilish aspect, and two horns jut from its forehead. The eyes glow with dull red light, and fog drifts from the shaped mouthguard. While you wear the helm, you have a +2 bonus to your Armor Class. In addition, you can use an action to cast the *fog cloud* and *fear* spell (spell save DC 14). Once you have cast one of the spells, you cannot cast that spell again until you finish a long rest.

The Artis Simulcra

Wondrous item, artifact

The ancient text details the creation of a blank and soulless artificial body grown from living tissue. If you study the *Artis Simulcra* for 6 days, and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check, you can decipher the book's powers. Using the book, you must spend 60 days working on the soulless creation and expending 2,000 gp in resources. Once you've completed this work, the artificial body grows from a small, single-celled organism to an infant over the course of 270 days. After this point, the vessel is readied. The soulless body grows to maturity at the normal rate of the originally donated tissue.

The soulless body can be used in two ways. Firstly, it can be used in conjunction with a *magic jar* spell as an empty vessel for a spirit or soul. Secondly, the soulless body can be used as the material components of the *clone* spell, which the book allows you to cast. Once you have cast the spell, you cannot do so again for 100 years.

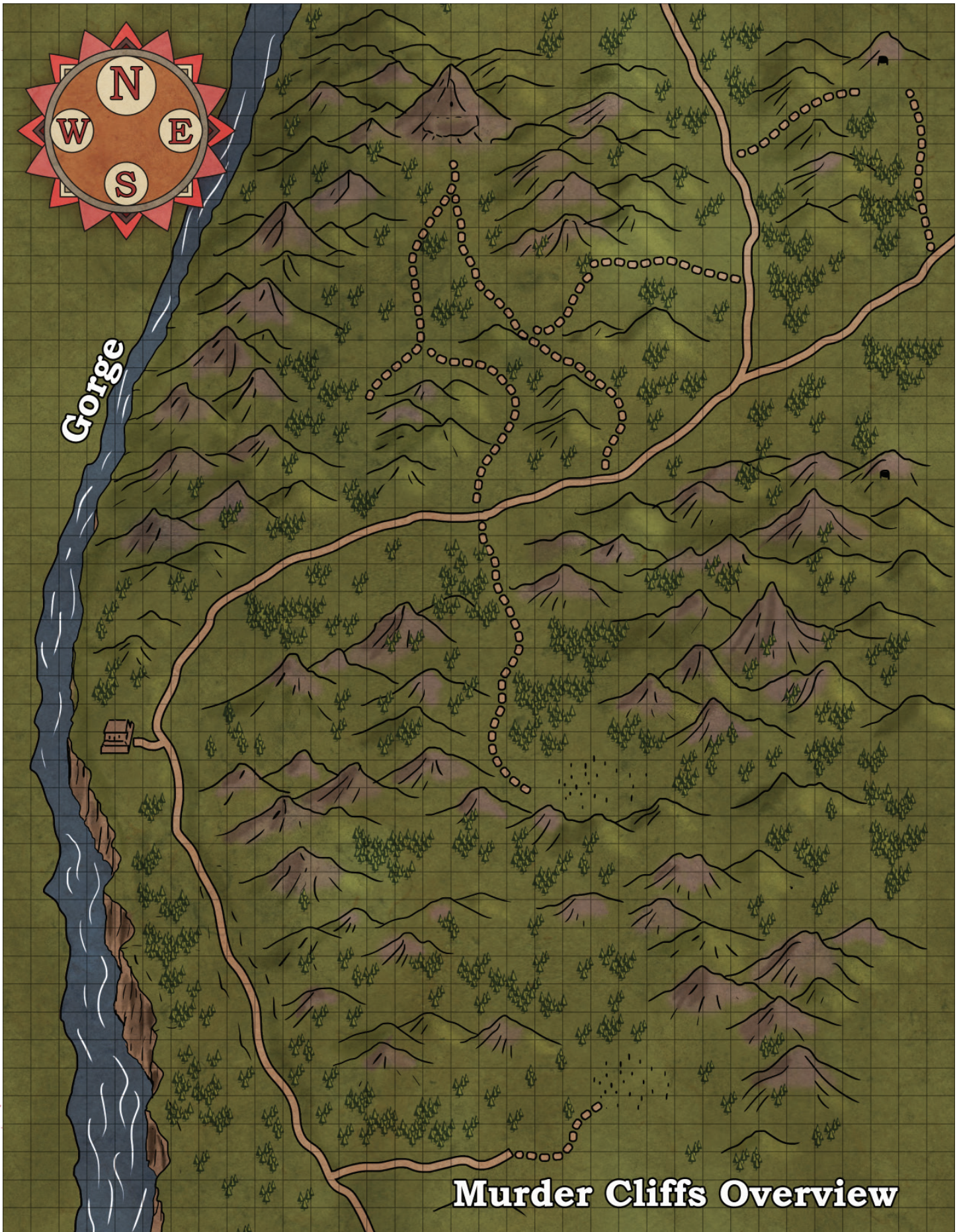
Talisman of Aspdu

Wondrous item, artifact

The *talisman of Aspdu* contains a small part of the pit fiend Aspdu's essence. Because of this, it has power over both the ghost of Aspdu, as well as other creatures similar to him.

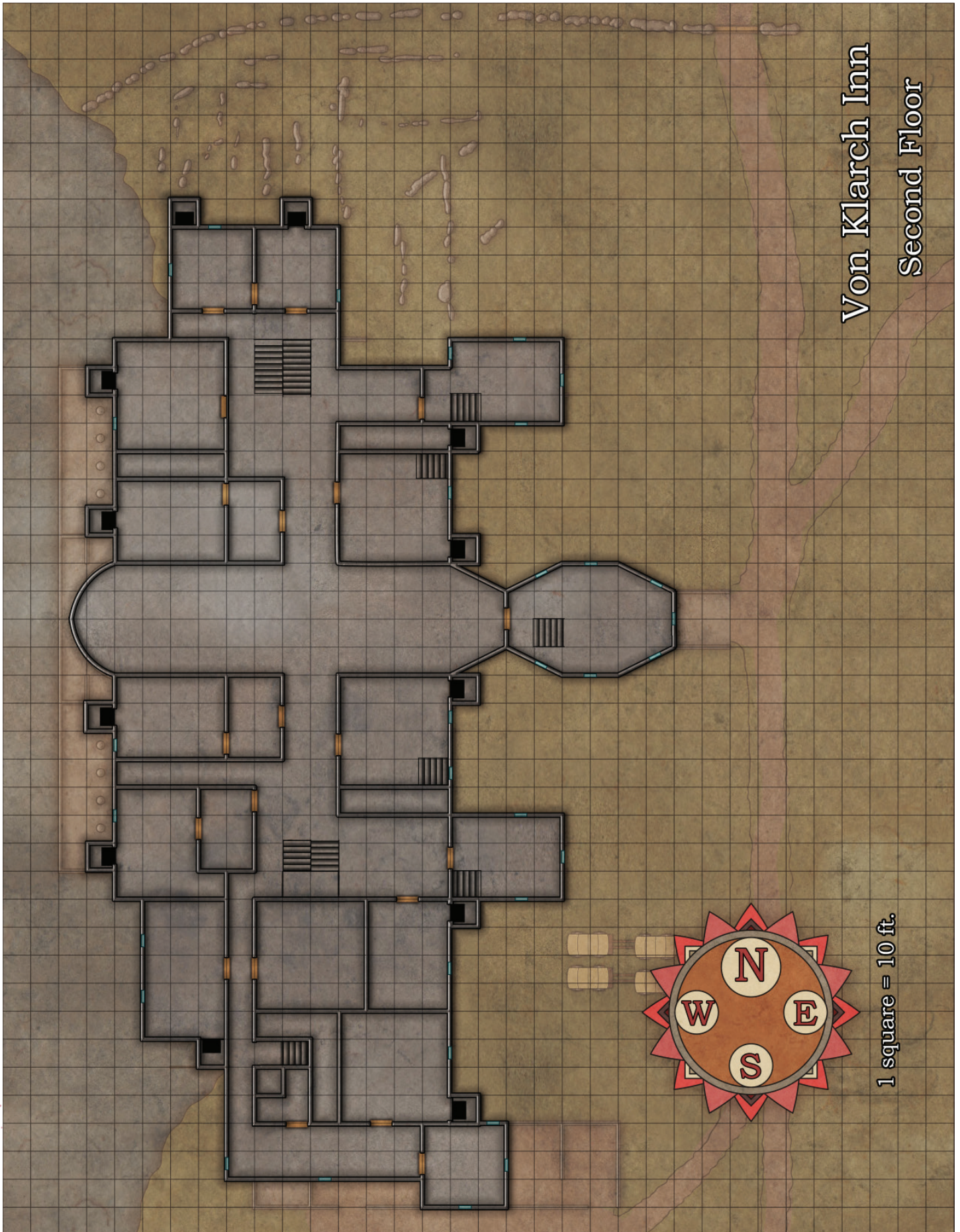
You can use an action to cast the *protection from evil and good* spell.

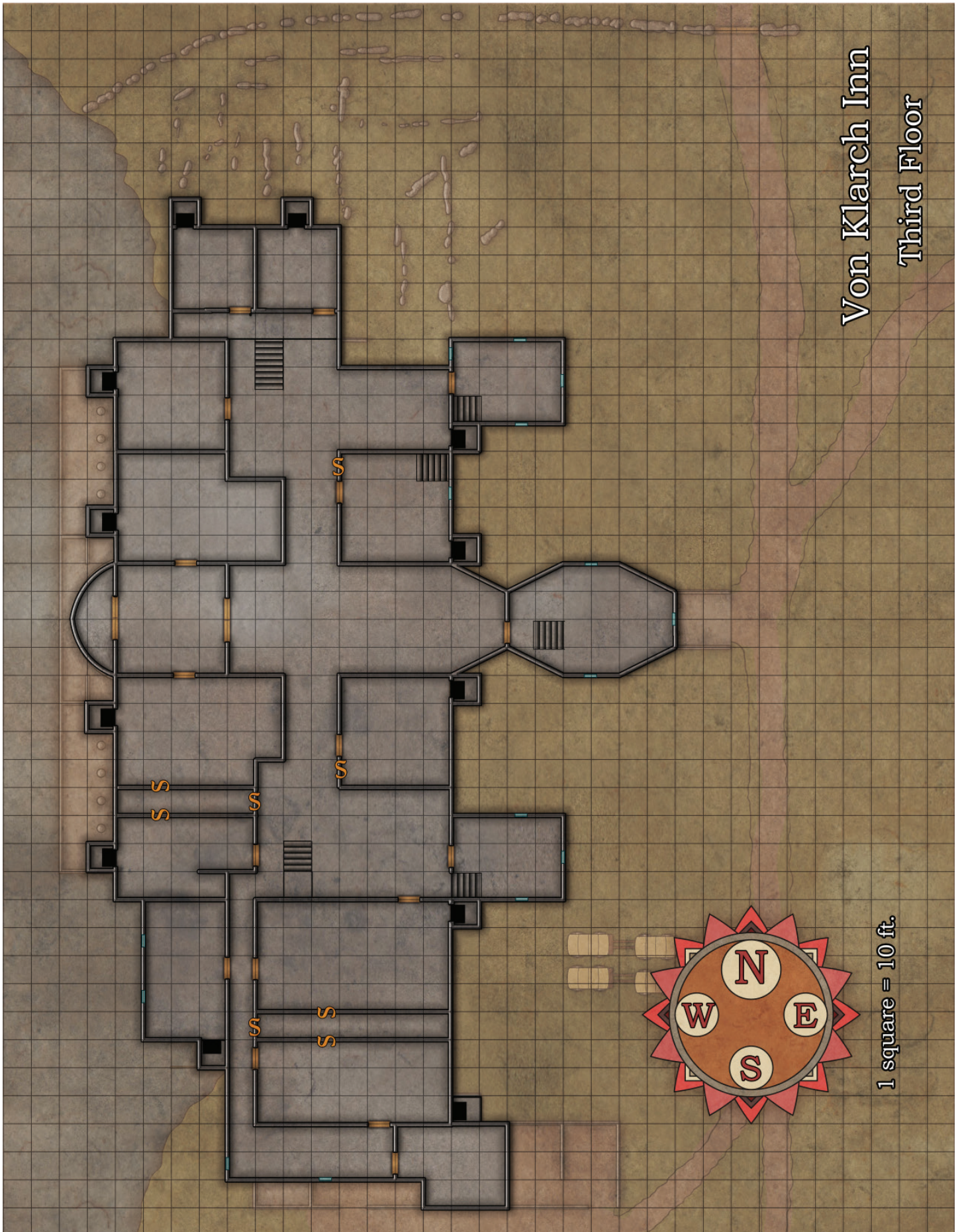
In addition, Aspdu cannot attack you while you hold the *talisman*. If you hold the *talisman*, you can also use an action to cause the ghost of Aspdu to teleport to an unoccupied space within 30 feet of you. Finally, if the *talisman* is placed on the soulless body in Area 37-C, Aspdu can enter the body and take control of it.



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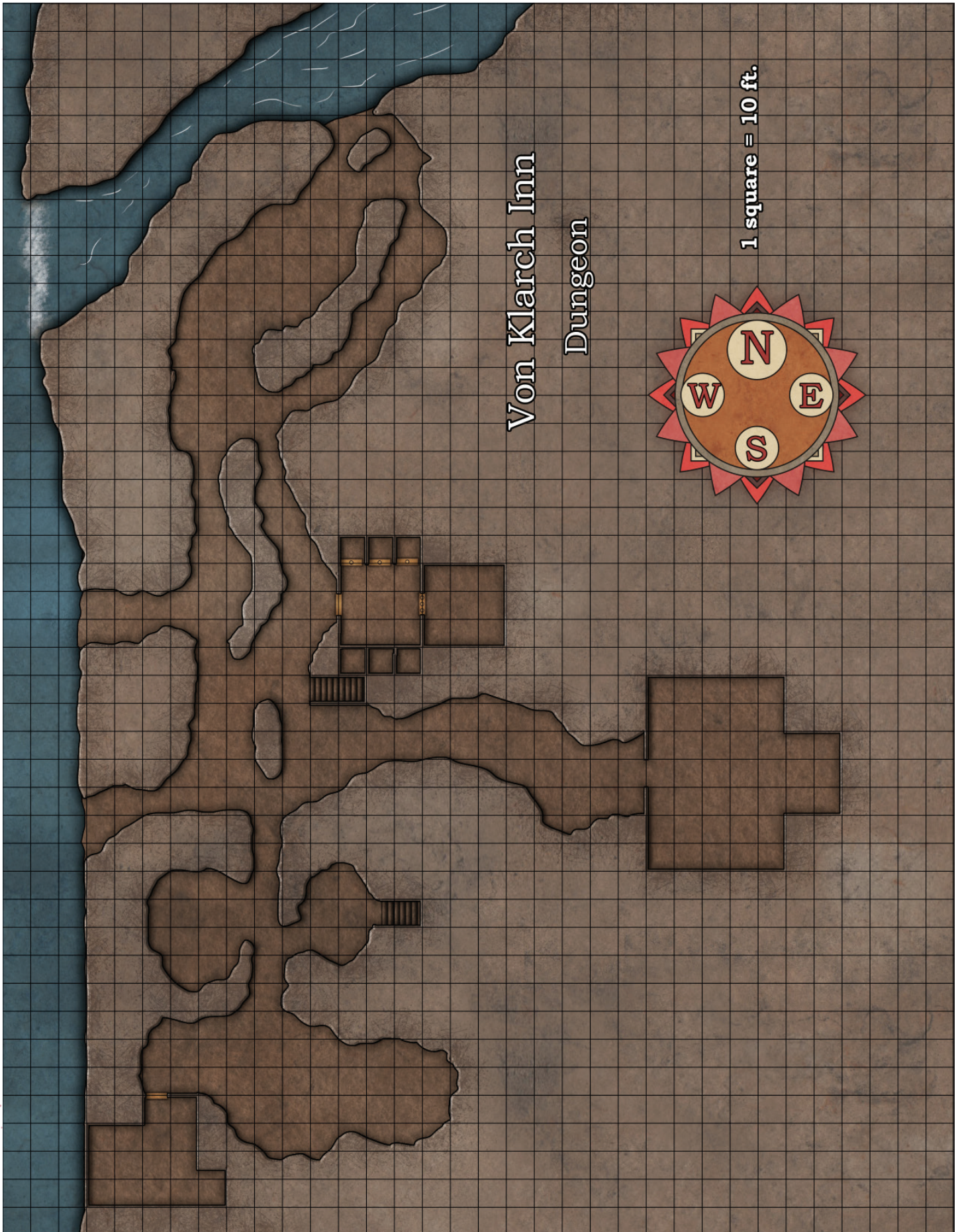




Von Klarch Inn
Third Floor

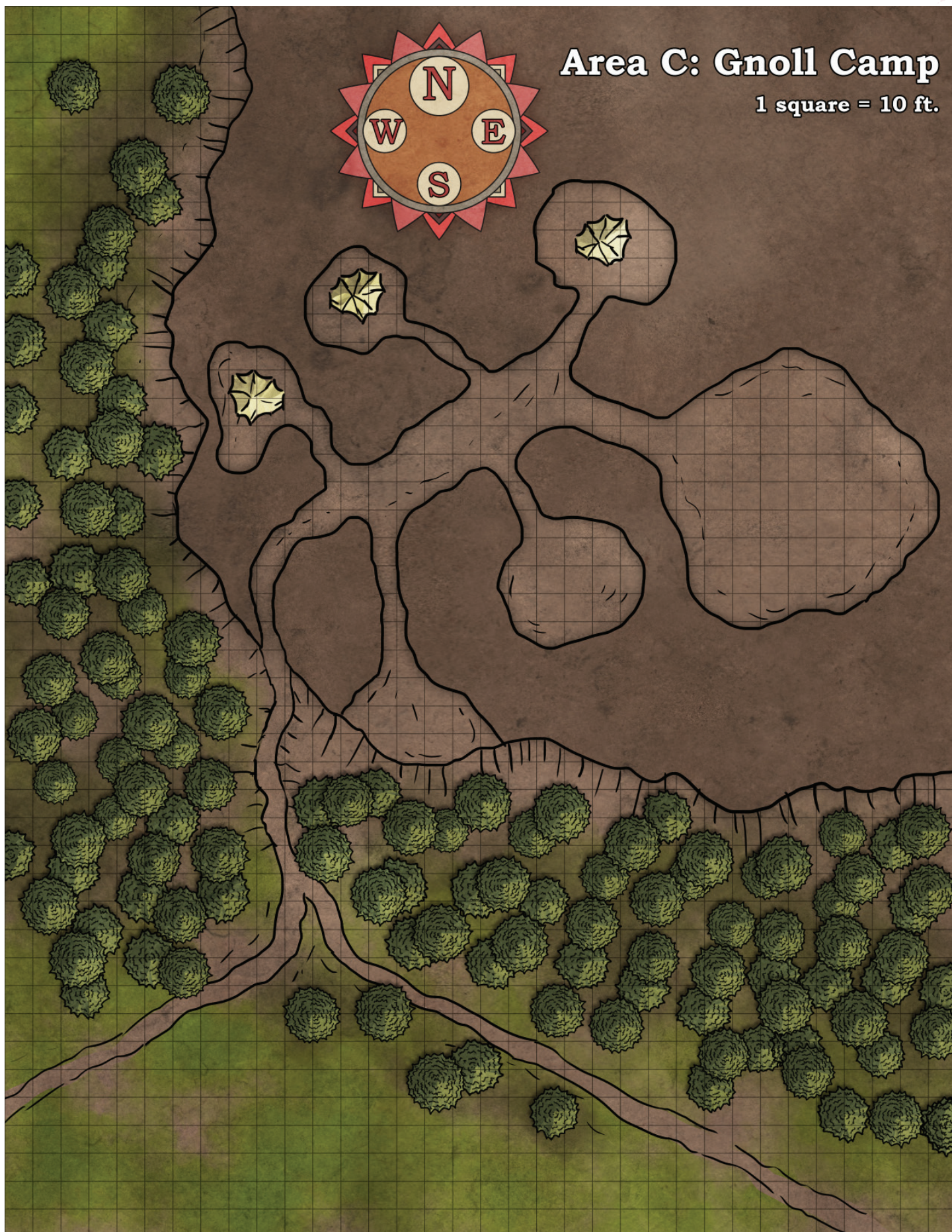


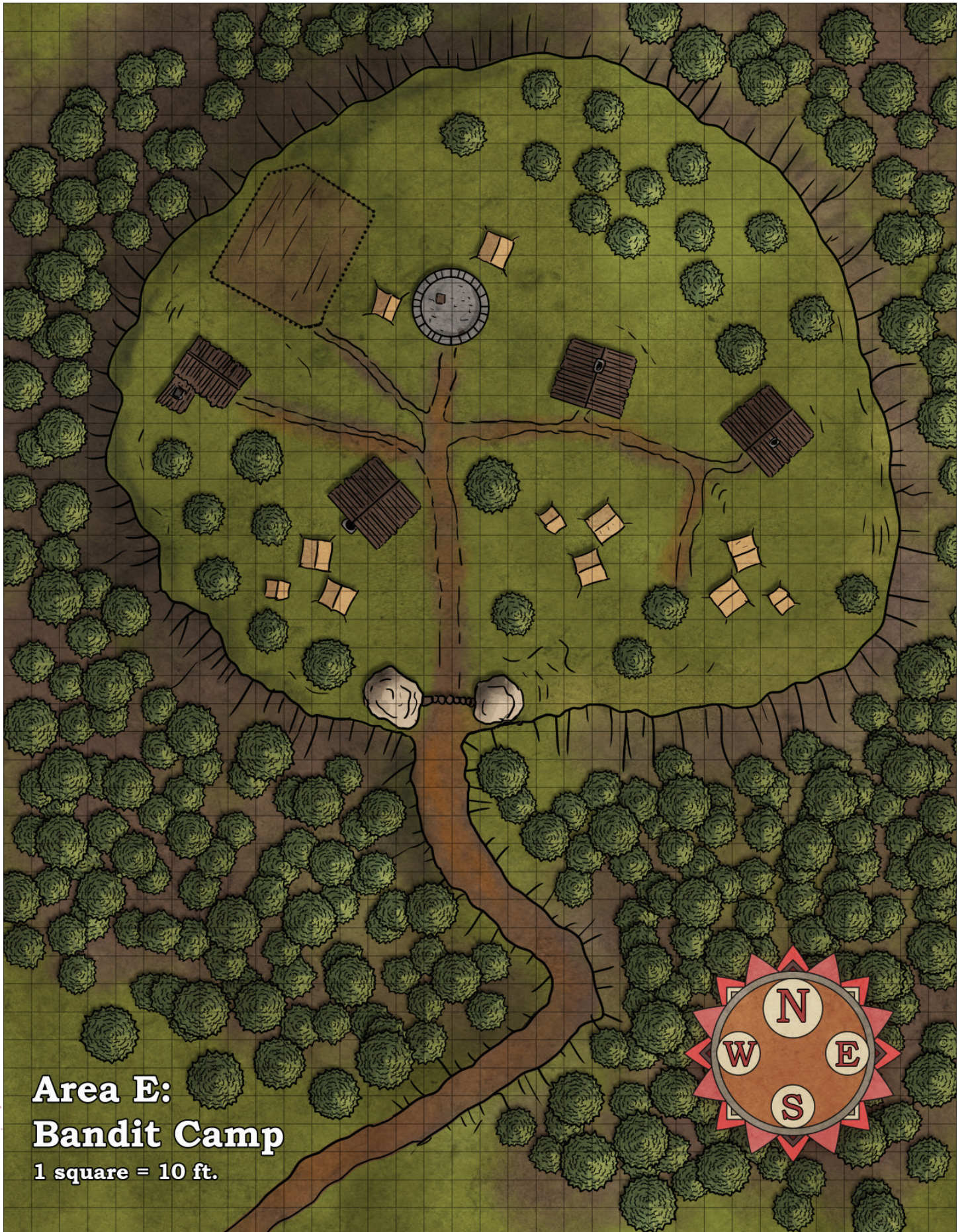
1 square = 10 ft.



Area C: Gnomish Camp

1 square = 10 ft.





THE DEVIL OF MURDER CLIFFS

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THE DEVIL OF MURDER CLIFFS

by Casey Christofferson

*In the pale light of the witching hour when the moon shows off its twin horns,
'Tis said that a devil rises from the deep with a murderous taste for the soul.
You will know ere he stalks for the crows love to talk
About how they have picked clean your bones.*

High in the cliffs along the timber road stands the Von Klarch Inn. Half ruin, half fortress, the repurposed manor serves as a waystation for adventurers seeking fame and fortune in the mountainous north. Built nearly 500 years ago, the inn started out as the estate of the wealthy Von Klarch family, who made their fortune trading with the northern dwarves.

In the intervening years, the family line has fallen on hard times. Frequent attacks by the rising tide of gnolls, orcs, and trolls who overtook the north over the intervening centuries wreaked havoc on large parts of the estate, destroying the north wing and shrinking the Von Klarches' once substantial land holdings.

More recently, attacks by local bandits — allegedly captained by a man referred to as the Devil of the Murder Cliffs in reference to a local legend — have increased in frequency. These attacks threaten travelers on the road and are bad for business.

Others say a true devil released from its bondage once again stalks the region of the Murder Cliffs. Despite these troubles, the Von Klarch Inn is the only reasonably civilized place to spend the night in the bandit-infested Murder Cliffs.



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